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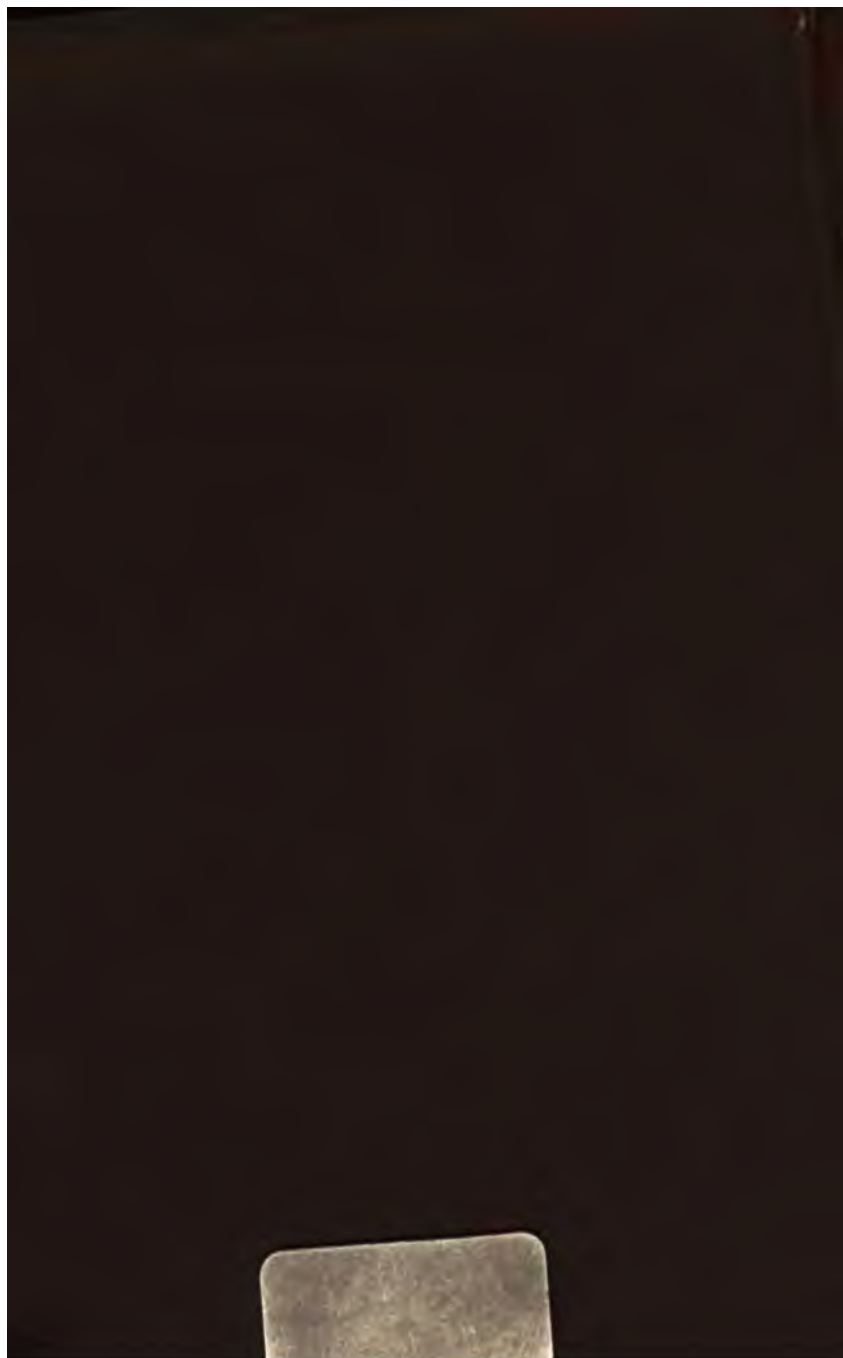
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THE FINE ARTS
AND THEIR USES.

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THE FINE ARTS

AND

THEIR USES.

ESSAYS

ON THE

*ESSENTIAL PRINCIPLES AND LIMITS OF EXPRESSION
OF THE VARIOUS ARTS,*

WITH

ESPECIAL REFERENCE TO THEIR POPULAR INFLUENCE.

BY

WILLIAM BELLARS.



LONDON:

SMITH, ELDER, & CO., 15 WATERLOO PLACE.

1876.

175 f. 56





TO
THE MEMORY OF

MY DEAR FRIEND,

ROBERT FREDERICK CHARLES MAUNDRELL.



P R E F A C E.

THE right appreciation of Art does not come by intuition, but by study and serious thought. The following pages have been written with the simple design of awakening such an interest in the subject as may lead to further investigation. I do not presume to come forward as an Art-teacher, but only to offer such thoughts and conclusions as have occurred to me in the course of my own inquiries on the subject, in the hope that they may induce some, at least, of my readers to think the matter out for themselves.

I am aware that much of what I have said has been said before, in a different and better way, by others. But my object has been to put forward a simple, but at the same time comprehensive, scheme

of æsthetics, which should be applicable to all Art, and available by any person. In the pursuance of this design, I have frequently found it desirable to explain things which have been already well treated by others, and have been compelled to adopt the same explanation—for I hold that in all things truth is better than originality. I desire to acknowledge in the fullest manner my obligations to the writings of Sir Joshua Reynolds, Sir Charles Eastlake, Leigh Hunt, and others, and especially to those of Mr Ruskin.

There is of course much, very much, in Art beyond what is here set forth. There is much to be found in the works of other writers which not only goes more deeply into details, but affords different views of the general question. But the great majority of writers on Art assume a very great deal to begin with ; they pass over the fundamental principles of Art, either as matters of little importance, or as already well understood. The present volume has been written under the conviction that this method is in many ways an unsatisfactory one, that the fundamental principles of Art are, as a rule, little thought about, and still less understood, and it is hoped that the following Essays

may promote a truer and clearer apprehension of these important matters; and that, by their aid, the further and deeper works of other writers may be better appreciated. It must not be supposed that what is said here is put forward as being final and sufficient. Art is many-sided, and many of its laws are of only partial application. In a small work there is much danger lest conclusions, which are true as far as they go, should be taken, or be made to appear, as of universal extent. I have done my best to avoid stating such things in a misleading way, and I trust the reader will bear in mind that, within the limits of such a book as that before him, it would be impossible to deal with more than some few leading principles.

The view which I have taken of Art is a very high, but I trust, also, a thoroughly practical, one. Man's spiritual nature is so closely interwoven with his physical part, that he cannot afford to disregard anything which appeals with any degree of force to either of these component elements of his being. But in dealing with Art as a great intellectual and moral agent, I am convinced that I have only treated

it in a way which its vast influence and capabilities show to be just; and I am satisfied that those who regard it as affecting the senses only, and as no more than an elegant amusement, have failed to appreciate its true character or conditions.

CANONBURY, 1875.

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THE FINE ARTS

AND THEIR USES

PART I.—PRINCIPLES.

CHAPTER I.

GENERAL VIEW OF THE FINE ARTS AND OF THEIR MUTUAL RELATIONS.

MOST of our actions, mental as well as physical, have a great tendency to become mechanical under the influence of repetition. We experience a sensation or an emotion, and treat it as a matter of course, without inquiring whether it is noble or ignoble, whether or not it is an indication of mental or moral health, or indeed why we experience it at all. It is well for us to endeavour occasionally to analyse the exciting causes of our ideas, so that by carefully regulating those sources, the ideas themselves may flow with a greater purity and increased nobleness and value. Not the least important among the external causes of ideas and emotions are what are commonly called the "Fine Arts;" important because they appeal, or are supposed to appeal, to the more refined and

cultivated feelings and fancies of which our nature is capable. It is obvious that each art is calculated to convey its own especial class of ideas, though few persons take any trouble to ascertain what or how worthy the latter may be.

The reason of the special neglect of what may be called the psychology of the fine arts, lies in the circumstance that they are all characterised by certain special and elaborate material features, by means of which the ideas of the artist are expressed. Whatever thoughts or feelings may be connected with them appear, not directly, but through some mode of external realisation. Even in Poetry, where the author's conceptions come most fully to the surface, language, though the simplest and most direct means of expressing our thoughts, assumes special forms; and the manner of employing it, the mastery and management of it, become important characteristics of the art. In the case of the other arts, the materials used are not such as, like language, exist for the express purpose of conveying ideas—they have to be adapted to the service. The various features of Nature—form, colour, sound, vital energy—are utilised as languages, and it is found that certain classes of ideas are thus expressed more fully than they could be conveyed by any other means. But these languages are extremely difficult to acquire, and the use of them—that is to say, the process of imitation or adaptation of natural materials for the purposes of expression—demands keenness of perception and manual skill, which are somewhat rarely to be met with. And however similar the arts may be in

object, in practical method they are widely different : so that proficiency in the mechanical part of any single art is not usually attained without long study and laborious effort, and the artist, to the end of his days, will find therein much still to be learned, much still to be achieved. The mastery of this alone involves mental and physical qualities in the artist sufficient to place him apart from other men. When it is further considered that the ideas proper to the fine arts are in many cases so subtle that they can only be conveyed by an exquisite *perfection* of materials and method, it is not surprising that technical merits are so generally regarded as the exclusive tests of an artist's greatness. His command of the language comes to be dwelt upon with little or no reference to the subject of which he treats. So much is this the case, that Art has always had a tendency to assume an exclusive and esoteric position, to take a jealous, half-defiant stand upon its technicality, and to associate itself with a small professional clique, whose *dicta* less-favoured individuals are not allowed to dispute.

It certainly cannot be too clearly recognised that purely technical matters require a special education for a correct estimate of their difficulties, and a due appreciation of the manner in which those difficulties have been faced or overcome. Nothing is more foolish than for any one to attempt to criticise departments of Art which he does not understand, or to lay down rules as to how an effect should be produced, without any personal experience of the difficulties involved, the limitations enforced by the

means employed, or the circumstances which in any given case may tend to modify the nature of the effects possible to the artist.

But, although the general public have no right to criticise methods, they are fully entitled to form an opinion about results. We may not, for instance, be competent to suggest the way in which a portrait should be painted, we may be still more utterly incompetent to paint one ourselves, but if we know the person it is supposed to represent, we shall be able to say whether it is like him or not. And the value of our opinion in such a case (at least, as regards resemblance) will not depend upon our knowledge of Art, but on our knowledge of the man. The more intimate we are with him, the better acquainted shall we be with the subtleties of his expression and the little peculiarities of feature and gesture which, though trifling in themselves, make up together his distinctive personality. Another person who knows the man less intimately will not notice the presence or absence of these minor features in the portrait, but they will make all the difference to us. In the same way, as far as any kind of art is imitative, a knowledge of the facts upon which it is based is sufficient to authorise any one to give an opinion upon it. An anatomist is entitled to tell a sculptor whether the limbs of his figures are rightly or wrongly proportioned; a shoemaker (as in an oft-quoted instance) may point out to a painter a defect in his drawing of a shoe; a country fellow, if he has a habit of observation, may be able to tell him whether he has rendered the hues of a sunset rightly. So, too, those only are competent

to criticise the blueness of M. Loppé's glacier-crevasses, or the drawing of Turner's Alpine passes, who have themselves studied amongst the mountains. And it is to be observed that this knowledge whether a thing is well done is entirely distinct from knowing how to do it. The latter entirely concerns the artist himself. One painter will cover large surfaces with the aid of his palette-knife where another would use a brush. What does this signify to the persons who afterwards see the picture? The only question for them is, whether the surface is rightly covered, and produces its due effect in relation to the rest of the work. The main qualifications, then, for a critic of the imitative part of art are sufficiency of information and accuracy of judgment.

But imitation is not the only end of Art ; it imitates for a purpose. It reproduces the facts of Nature, but it does so in order to tell us something about them. It is at its best imperfect ;—a real tree is much more beautiful than any painted one, a tragedy in real life more interesting than all the sorrows of the stage ; and therefore, if it were the sole function of Art to represent such things with great *vraisemblance*, it would be wise to discard it and go direct to Nature herself. But the beauty, the grandeur, the moral teaching, the spiritual significance of the world around us, are by ordinary people almost, if not altogether, overlooked, and would be no better understood if we could exactly reproduce the features of Nature in the form of paintings or sculptures or plays. Just as conceited and empty-headed tourists journey through earth's fairest scenes untaught and uninspired, so

would they pass by with vapid praise and yawning admiration the exactest counterpart of them which we can conceive. It is much better as it is. The artist can only give us a portion of the effects of Nature; but he can place them in special lights, can insist upon certain features, can mark particular associations of facts and sequences of ideas, can, in short, use his art as a vehicle of thought, and all its technicalities as varying means of expression.

It is only thus that Art can rise above the dignity of a toy. It is true that it may and does give pleasure when it tells of nothing but the technical ability of the artist. Thousands of people go into raptures over Verrio's painted fiddle at Chatsworth, who would be in no way affected by the contemplation of a real violin. The emotion excited in them is precisely the same that would be aroused by a set of Chinese concentric balls intricately carved. These persons are delighted only by the skill and patience of the workman; and the artist who works to be so admired, works in mere vanity and selfishness of heart. Playthings are very useful in their way, but Art would be at least unworthy of the life-toil of its professors, or the enthusiastic study of its amateurs, if it were no better than a superior kind of legerdemain.

The common criticism of Art is directed principally to technical points, but however valuable such criticism may be, there is another basis of judgment which should not be overlooked. Art is submitted to the public, and it would be well if the proper grounds upon which the public estimate of it should be founded were more generally appreciated. People

often form wrong opinions about works of art, simply because they approach them from a wrong point of view ; they attempt to judge the technical qualities which they do not understand, and altogether neglect to inquire into the thought and purpose of the works, which they might fully realise if they were to bring to the investigation simple tastes, honest sentiment, and refined feeling. We shall sometimes find that an artist has striven to express a noble thought with insufficient materials and inadequate powers. It is better to appreciate the thought than to condemn the failure ; and though whatever is worth doing at all is worth doing well, technical criticism will often lead to a forgetfulness of the higher and worthier qualities of the art, which if duly considered might help to purify our hearts and instruct our minds. If a man were to sit down to criticise Carlyle's style, he would have his hands full ; but who would wish Carlyle to change his style ? Let him say things in his own way and we are all glad to listen to him. Shakspeare was ungrammatical and unscientific, but Shakspeare "improved" is a monstrosity.

It is purposed in this and the following essays to discuss the intellectual and emotional functions of the different arts, to endeavour to ascertain as far as possible the position which they severally occupy with regard to the conveyance of thought and feeling, to inquire what ideas are proper to each of them, and what are the limits of their respective spheres.

These essays are not intended in any way for artists. We want artists to give us the outcome of their minds and hearts, but we cannot tell them what

to think or feel. This must come naturally, or not at all. If they are wise and good men, they will give us wisdom and goodness in their art. If they are vain and foolish men, they will not fail to display their vanity and folly, whatever we may say; and with the technical part of Art, the only part of it which can be taught, we are not here concerned. Our object is to ascertain as well as we can what the arts ought to do, not how they ought to be done;—and to examine their characteristics as important aids to moral and intellectual progress, rather than as elaborate exhibitions of mechanical dexterity and special acquirements. We shall, indeed, have to inquire into the mechanical *conditions* of the arts, but only so far as these impose conditions upon their expressive functions.

Looking at the arts from this point of view, it would perhaps be better to call them “The Poetical Arts,”—and in so doing to define them. This, however, necessitates an explanation of what is meant by “Poetical.”

After some consideration, it is suggested that Poetry consists simply in the treatment of a subject by the Imagination. What is meant may be best explained by an illustration. Many persons have looked upon fair village churchyards at set of sun, without perceiving anything noticeable about them. The tree-tops glowing with the last rays of evening; the ivy—ever fresh—flinging its young arms around the rugged, time-worn tower; the calm repose of the grey stones, and the solemn toss of the green waves beneath the gloomy yews; the stillness, made more

still by the twittering or hooting of birds and the mellow voice of the evening bell,—all these things strike the senses of an ordinary observer merely as parts of a somewhat pleasant scene. Lovely sunsets are of common enough occurrence, and what is there in the churchyard itself to possess more than a quite ordinary interest? But presently there comes one who leans awhile upon the little rustic gate. And as the gloom steals over the landscape, and the shadows thicken about the dark trees, his thoughts creep onward to that sunset of life when he too will be laid beneath the springing flowers; and his fancies find expression in poetry :—

“The curfew tolls the knell of parting day.”

This is an example of only one out of many functions of the Imagination; it will be necessary to inquire more particularly, hereafter, into the exact nature of their operation. The Imagination is intimately connected with our emotions, by which may be understood those natural impulses of the mind which do not appear to be subservient to the intellect, though, like every other mental phenomenon, they are excitable by external causes. The effort to give these emotions some outward and communicable form is the work of the Imagination, the result being some description of Poetry.

Sometime after the above definition had been framed, the writer found the subject fully treated in one of Mr Ruskin's books. “I come,” he says, “after some embarrassment, to the conclusion that Poetry is the suggestion by the imagination of noble

grounds for the noble emotions. I mean by the noble emotions those four principal sacred passions—Love, Veneration, Admiration, and Joy (this latter especially, if unselfish), and their opposites—Hatred, Indignation (or Scorn), Horror, and Grief, this last, when unselfish, becoming Compassion." This appears to be rather a description of what good poetry ought to be than of what all poetry necessarily is. We need not hesitate to accept Mr Ruskin's definition on account of what it includes, but it is a question whether it includes enough.

For the present, we may assume Poetry simply to mean the product of the Imagination. In this view, its importance can hardly be over-estimated. So large a portion of our nature is governed by our emotions, and so emphatic are the latter in their demands for expression, that it would be worse than useless to attempt to ignore them, the more so as they are, like our reasoning faculties, capable of a high degree of cultivation. Only a man of exquisitely fine mental and moral constitution could produce a Dante's "Inferno," an Angelico's painting, or a Beethoven's sonata, for none but such a man would experience emotions and thoughts sufficiently refined and elevated to need such expression. Just in the same way, it needs some corresponding refinement to fully appreciate such works, for appreciation is founded upon the existence of feelings which are satisfied by the expression so afforded them. Though the greatness of an artist is always more or less due to natural gifts, the taste of both artist and amateur may generally be cultivated. But we can easily

understand how it is that different people are differently affected by the various arts. Each man has his own particular fancies and emotions which crave for expression, and each seizes upon that art by which he finds them most fully conveyed.

In considering the Poetical Arts in detail, we may first inquire whether they can be disposed in any natural order and sequence which will at once illustrate and connect them. In such an endeavour, the example of Auguste Comte's classification of the Sciences at once occurs to the mind. Before his time, almost every writer had arranged them upon a different system. One proceeded in the order of historical development, another "according to some distinction between the different faculties of the human mind." As Comte himself naïvely remarks: "On sait que six objets comportent 720 dispositions différentes. Les sciences fondamentales pourraient donc donner lieu à 720 classifications distinctes, parmi lesquelles il s'agit de choisir la classification, nécessairement unique, qui satisfait le mieux aux principales conditions du problème." *

Comte's method was this: to proceed from the most simple and abstract science to the most complex and concrete, in such a manner that each one should involve all the preceding, and add beside something of its own. So that from Mathematics we have a regular succession, proceeding through Astronomy, Physics, Chemistry, and Physiology, to Social Science, which involves them all. Other systems have since been propounded, notably one by Mr Herbert Spencer,

* Cours de Philosophie Positive, Leçon ii.

which is founded upon the distinction between the abstract and the concrete sciences. Without attempting to discuss the claims of these rival methods, it may be remarked that all classifications depend upon certain common features of the objects classified, and thus different arrangements may be made according to the end in view. The best arrangement, however, for general purposes, will be that which involves the maximum of agreement. To take a familiar example: one man may arrange his books upon his shelves according to their size, another according to their contents; the former plan will be the better as far as appearance is concerned, the latter will be more convenient for reference. A third plan which should combine the two would be better still. In the present case we are considering the fine arts in reference to the ideas which they are severally competent to convey to the mind. It will therefore be most natural to arrange them according to their powers in this respect. Some of the arts are so connected with each other in practice that it would be difficult to carry out such a method with rigid exactness, and no attempt will be made to apply it to the various minor ramifications of the subject; but it can certainly be carried out to some extent, and it appears to offer a convenient starting-point for our inquiries.

We may then arrange the Fine Arts in the following order, beginning with the most complex: (1.) Verbal Poetry, or the poetry of Language; (2.) Painting, or the poetry of Form and Colour; (3.) Sculpture, or the poetry of Vital Form; (4.) Architecture, or the poetry of Inanimate Form; (5.) Music, or the poetry of

Sound; (6.) Acting,* or the poetry of Human Action; (7.) Dancing, or the poetry of Vital Motion.

At the head of the list stands Verbal Poetry, which is the most comprehensive of all; and, indeed, is capable of expressing every form of Imagination, emotional or otherwise. It does not, of course, include the other arts, but it includes the ideas which those arts are suited to convey. It cannot, perhaps, in some cases, express them so fully, but it does express them all; and besides these it has its own especial sphere in the rendering of purely *mental* truths.

Language is always coextensive with our definite ideas, for as new forms of thought arise in the course of the world's progress, new terms are invented to express them. Verbal Poetry can be in the highest degree definite, and no thoughts are so exalted, no associations of ideas so subtle, that a great poet will not find words to convey them. It does not follow that every man, nor even that every poet, will be able to communicate them; on the contrary, it is one of the distinguishing marks of greatness in this branch of art, to be able to choose the words which will convey the exact shade of the desired emotion or idea. Macaulay says of Milton: "His poetry acts like an incantation. Its merit lies less in its obvious meaning than in its occult power. There would seem at first sight to be no more in his words than in other words. But they are words of enchantment. No sooner are they pronounced, than the past is present and the distant near. New forms of beauty start at once into existence, and all the

* Including Pantomime and Elocution.

burial-places of the memory give up their dead. Change the structure of the sentence, substitute one synonym for another, and the whole effect is destroyed. The spell loses its power, and he who should then hope to conjure with it would find himself as much mistaken as Cassim, in the Arabian tale, when he stood crying, 'Open, Wheat!' 'Open, Barley!' to the door which obeyed no sound but 'Open, Sesame!''

Thus, even if an emotion should be so complex or so vague that any definite image would be too harsh and crude to express it, the poet will throw the very words themselves into such a form as to produce the desired effect by the influence of their mere music. The main characteristic, however, of Verbal Poetry is its full expression of definite ideas, and the poetry of the words themselves is an adjunct and helper to this principal object.

The view thus taken of Verbal Poetry will necessarily cause us to exclude from it much that is usually classed with it; for instance, many a production in which a story is told simply and even effectively, and perhaps in lines of ten syllables, but withal in a manner essentially prosaic. The explanation and illustration already given in speaking of "Poetry" in its wider acceptation will apply fully to this form, which indeed is the verbal expression of it in its entirety.

When we pass from Verbal Poetry to Painting, we find at once that we have lost a great deal. We can now only express what we can *see*, and of purely mental phenomena we can only give such an account

as may be conveyed by outward and visible signs. Whatever we can think we can say, for our thoughts themselves are clothed in words—nay, whatever we can *feel* a great poet will indicate, but we think and feel many things that we cannot depict on canvas; and even when the pencil of the painter does give utterance to solemn teaching or noble aspiration, it is by no means certain that his meaning will be understood. It is not every one who will listen to the “tongues in the trees,” or read the “books in the running brooks,” or who can comprehend the subtle change and play of emotion which flit across a human face. A painter has no means of impressing his meaning upon our mind. If we do not understand him, he cannot explain himself; and it is certain that of the people who visit our picture-galleries, nine-tenths see nothing more in Turner or in Francia than a more or less successful attempt to reproduce some external fact of nature or of history. So far, then, Painting is less perfect and its speech is less articulate than Verbal Poetry. But it is still a grand art. And it is important in this way. The messages of Nature are communicated by her only to a few. Much of her utterance, whether in land, or sky, or human form, is rapid and fugitive. Not many are admitted to her audience, and what she says she says once and does not repeat. It is for the painter to grasp her words as they fall and stereotype them for ever.

We must remember, however, that, like other languages, Painting may unhappily be made to express evil things;—or it may be “like a tale told by an idiot—signifying nothing.” This is the danger,

as it would seem, of modern art. Artists have so often nothing to say, and proceed to say it.

If we leave Painting for Sculpture, we again surrender something, and something of importance. We give up *colour*.* This, which is capable of conveying so much exquisite pleasure, is unconnected with any definite ideas, though it may express indefinite feelings, such as gaiety or sadness, or such ideas as that of purity, of which last it has been called a type. It is, therefore, not so much an exponent of Thought as an element of *Beauty*.

An inquiry into the sources of our ideas of Beauty, and the psychological processes connected with them, is for the present reserved. But we may anticipate so much as to assume that there is one principle which may be applied to every form of the pursuit of Beauty. As soon as our admiration is directed towards man's work, or limited by man's so-called rules of taste, it becomes degraded and ignoble, and we may well adopt the grand motto which the Royal Academy has inscribed around its central hall:—

"The hearts of men, which fondly here admire
Fair-seeming shows, may lift themselves up higher,
And learn to love with zealous, humble duty,
The Eternal Fountain of that Heavenly Beauty."

This is the proper use and function of this class of ideas. All beautiful things are given us to be enjoyed, but to be enjoyed with due reference to the

* Of course a piece of sculpture may be painted, but then it becomes a combination of two arts. Sculpture, *per se*, has nothing to do with colour. Moreover, the combination, when it does occur, is not generally satisfactory, as will be seen hereafter.

Giver, and for larger apprehension of His infinite glory and perfection.

In Sculpture, then (as such), we are deprived of a most valuable and important element of Art. But it is also evident that its range of subject is extremely limited. Of sky, of rock, of sea, it can tell nothing, and herein is immense loss. But we have much left. We can still express definite thoughts, whether by simple narration, subtle suggestion, or association of ideas. Sculpture has been described above as the "poetry of Vital Form," for such all great and noble sculpture must ever be, and the fact of its dealing so immediately with Nature is one of its greatest safeguards. In the grace and infinite grandeur and pathos of human form especially, there is a mine which can never be exhausted.

Of Architecture, the art placed next upon the list, it is somewhat difficult to treat, as it is so greatly complicated with the one which has been just considered. Architecture, as such, consists in the disposition of the component parts of a building, and the direction of their *form*, the sculpture which is superposed upon them belonging to the other art. Thus the arches of doors, the traceries of windows, the contours of capitals, belong to Architecture, but the floral embellishment of the capital is an application and adaptation of the art of Sculpture. This may, perhaps, seem fanciful, but it will be seen that for our present purpose, at least, we must take the art to be what it has been called above—the "poetry of Inanimate Form." Not, observe, unnatural form, for probably all beautiful forms are to be found in Nature,

but form abstracted from the objects in which it naturally occurs, and applied to new purposes and in new combinations. The main ideas which this art can convey are those of beauty, grandeur, utility, and strength; the two latter including adaptation to an end, and an easy and graceful conquest of difficulties. In stepping from Sculpture to Architecture it will be observed that we have almost entirely lost the power of expressing *definite* thoughts; but Architecture is entitled to rank next for this, if for no other reason, that she employs the more expressive art so largely that (as far as Architecture is concerned) the two become practically inseparable.

Next upon the list comes Music, and some may perhaps be disposed to wonder at its being placed so low. It appears to exercise a more widespread influence than any other art. It can rouse us from depression, soothe us under suffering, and soften us even when we are tempted to despair. But with all this, it will be found that its influence over us rests upon its power to awaken two principal phases of emotion, and, generally speaking, those only: that is to say, elation and depression in all their various forms; the former, when sudden, being what we express by the word "inspiring,"—when more slowly and moderately excited, producing a calm joy, and all forms of gentle, soothing influence. We must not, of course, confound, in such an inquiry, music pure and simple, with music explained and elucidated by words which are intended to accompany it, and the sentiment of which is often mistaken for that of the music itself. No one, who had not

been previously enlightened on the subject, would ever guess at the occurrence supposed to have suggested the "Harmonious Blacksmith;" and it will be found that the allusions in Beethoven's "Pastoral Symphony" are much more fully understood when there is a sort of syllabus in the programme for easy reference. Even these are not fair examples, for as they contain direct imitations of natural sounds, it would not be surprising if their motives were readily recognised.

Music is, in fact, an indefinite art. The love of it is only one form of the appreciation of the Beautiful in God's creation to which reference has already been made. It has often been asked why so much of the best music is sad. Is it not for the same reason that so much of the best poetry is sad? Nearly all men who think or feel deeply are so oppressed by the miseries and mysteries around them that joy comes to them but seldom, and before they can embrace her she has again fled. Probably bright and happy men would always write bright and happy music;—but such men are hard to find.

As expressing, then, the many phases of the two great divisions of emotion above indicated, Music has been given its present place in the series.

It is to be remarked that Music consists of two parts—one being the work of the composer, which is permanent; the other that of the executant, which is transient. The distinction is of some importance in practice, as it gives rise to a distinct order of artists in each case. The same thing occurs in Acting, and the subordinate art of Elocution. Thus we have the

musical composer, and the musical performer ; the writer of plays, poems, or essays, and the actor or elocutionist. It is, of course, possible for one man to combine the two functions, but the functions themselves are quite distinct.

The place of Acting has been assigned to it here in view of its purely interpretative character. It is altogether dependent upon extraneous sources for its leading motives. Important as it is in view of its immense influence, its powers must not be confounded with those of arts which are competent to create as well as to expound subjects of thought.

Sculpture has been defined as the "poetry of Vital Form." It may occur to the reader that some kinds of dramatic art may have a claim to a similar definition.* It is obvious that the various departments of fine art touch each other at many points, and it would at first seem as though the great difference between sculpturesque and dramatic art were simply that between permanence and transience. Facial and corporeal expression, it may be urged, are Nature's own sculpture, and they take a lower place merely from the fact that we cannot arrest their manifestation and fix it in a lasting form. This would certainly be a very cogent reason for placing a wide interval between the arts, even were no other discoverable, but it will be seen that there is a more fundamental difference. Sculpture is concerned with the poetry of the form itself. The Drama is merely the illustration of poetry of another and an independent kind—a poetry which

* This view is supported by Mr Ruskin in "Aratra Pentelici," p. 32.

has a more general intellectual scope, and which dramatic art can expound but cannot give birth to. The test of imagination may be applied here, and it will be seen at once that in the Drama such beauty of vital form as may exist is the work of Nature, and therefore cannot be called "Art" at all. The will is powerless to produce it. Imagination in the Drama consists in the fit and beautiful association of actions with given poetical ideas. These latter it illustrates but does not originate.

When we come to the art which has been placed last upon the list, we find that we are reduced to the expression of *one* principal emotion, with total indefiniteness of idea. Dancing can for the most part tell of nothing but joy. It would not be correct to confine the art absolutely to the signification of this emotion, but the extreme rarity with which it can be employed for any other purpose, warrants us in regarding its powers of expression as very limited.

Some may perhaps wonder at Dancing being admitted to a place amongst the arts at all, and the phrase—"the poetry of motion"—is more often used in jest than earnest; but the fact is, that the majority of people know very little about dancing. We have most of us danced as children, but we have given it up long since. We now walk through solemn quadrilles, and swim through giddy waltzes in crowded ballrooms, but we never dance. And possibly, as in the case of Hood's "childish ignorance" about the tree-tops, "'tis little joy" to have got so far beyond it. As for the modern ballet, it is at once meretricious and ugly. It

has become artificial, indeed, but it has ceased to be artistic.

But have you never seen a picture something like this?—One of our old friends, the organ-grinders—such a source of pleasure to the lower, and so much abused by the upper classes—has dragged his organ wearily into a quiet street on a bright summer evening. He is heavy-hearted, for he has received but few halfpence, the sun has been intensely hot, and he has been “moved on” all day, having been unfortunate enough to disturb three sick persons and a mathematician. But he must try and earn another penny or two, and he begins once more to grind out the old tunes, now so familiar that he scarcely hears them. A group of little children from a neighbouring alley gather round him, and gaze with wondering eyes upon his instrument and upon himself. He smiles upon them, sadly enough, for in his simple heart he loves young children dearly, and once in the old Italian days—days now so infinitely far removed—had some of his own. But soon the tune is done; the barrel is shifted, and he begins another. It is an old Scotch reel, with a lilt and a quaint chime about it that would make the very gas-lamps caper in their sockets if they knew how. And soon the children’s eyes begin to sparkle, the dimples deepen in their dusky cheeks, and with one merry glance at their entertainer, they are dancing as only children can. Their round arms escaping from their dingy sleeves, their rich, tangled hair falling over their shoulders, and their little lithe forms swaying with an infinite grace,—their innocence, for they are innocent as yet even in a

London alley, their health, and all the exquisite joy of young existence find their best expression so. At last the tune is done, but the organ-man asks for no halfpence; he has been more than paid: and as he bears his lightened instrument away, he bids farewell with nods and smiles and waving hand, and thinks he may yet, perhaps, make a good day's work of it after all. There is little art in this dancing, but it shows what dancing may do, and it is upon such natural grace of action that the art is founded.

Thus, then, the Fine Arts may be arranged in such a manner as to exhibit a regular gradation in their powers, from the highest to the lowest. To some persons this may appear a cold and unsympathetic mode of treating them, and possibly it may be more especially felt to be so with regard to Music, which will be thought to be somewhat degraded by the comparatively low position here assigned to it. But it should be observed that the system is based upon the degrees of expression of which the several arts are capable, and not upon their relative importance, which latter varies with different individuals. It by no means follows that the most exalted things are always the most important. For example, the main facts about a steam-engine—the things which give it its character and power—are the boilers, and pistons, and cranks. And it is quite conceivable that if things never did what they ought not to do, and boilers never became overheated, an engine might go on very well without such a thing as a safety-valve. But, practically, we find that a safety-valve is most

important, and needs as much thought and care as any other part of the machine.

Besides this, it will be found that, as each successive art yields something up, it appears to gain a proportionately greater power of expressing what remains. Verbal Poetry has been spoken of as capable of every variety of poetical expression, but it does not follow that it will express all ideas equally well. Thus words may be used to paint with. Listen to Shelley:—

“ Nearer to the river’s trembling edge
There grew broad flag-flowers purple, pranked with white,
And starry river-buds among the sedge,
And floating water-lilies broad and bright,
Which lit the oaks that overhung the hedge
With moonlight beams of their own watery light,
And bulrushes and reeds of such deep green
As soothed the dazzled eye with sober sheen.”

Do you not see these water-lilies? nevertheless, a painter would have rendered them better. But then he could not have told you about the

“ Sound of waters murmuring
Along a shelving bank of turf which lay
Under a copse, and hardly dared to fling
Its green arms round the bosom of the stream,
But kissed it, and then fled,”—

or if he had had the fancy, he could only have shown you the place, and taken the very small chance of your own thoughts suggesting his idea.

So, too, Sculpture, which, as we have seen, has no power to express colour, or any of the larger features of Nature, has a much greater power of expressing such form as comes within its reach than Painting can lay claim to. The latter can only give us the

appearance of the form, and frequently fails to do so fully; but Sculpture presents us with the very form itself, and leaves Nature to do her own shading and foreshortening. And when we come to Dancing, the last of all the arts, one which certainly holds an inferior rank, we find that the emotion with which it is principally concerned—that of joy—it expresses as nothing else in the whole world can. Naturally so, for everything is better done when it is attended to exclusively.

One word as to the conclusions which the foregoing considerations suggest to us, respecting the true source of greatness in Art. We see throughout that Art may have something more to do than merely to amuse; that it may have some help to give, some teaching to convey. It is because men have so often missed this truth, and have taken up artistic pursuits thoughtlessly and vaingloriously, that failure to fulfil their higher purpose has so frequently been apparent. It is thus that we constantly see great abilities flung away upon ignoble thought, lives spent in giving teaching that will only corrupt, and supplying food that will slowly poison. The recognition of the intellectual and moral powers of Art is, of course, the first step towards their right employment.



CHAPTER II.

IMAGINATION.

IN all inquiries which aspire to be anything more than superficial, it is of great importance to obtain clear definitions of the things discussed, and of the terms used in discussing them. One great bar to the right solution of the questions debated amongst men, is misapprehension of each other's meaning. Our antagonist is talking about one thing, and we are talking about another, and so no satisfactory conclusion can possibly be arrived at between us. In this view it is of much less consequence that a man should attach a wrong meaning to his words than that we should attribute to them a meaning which he does not intend, even should ours be true and his false. For if we can once clearly see what his error is, we may succeed in removing it; but if we mistake its nature, our arguments must of necessity be idle and ineffectual, for they are aimed at another point, and never strike the real mark at all.

We have spoken of "Poetry" (which has been defined as the product of the "Imagination") as the great essential characteristic of all the "fine arts," as that which causes them to *be* fine arts as

distinguished from mechanical arts on the one hand, and science and mere commonplace fact on the other. The importance of such a comprehensive principle of art is very great; but in order to perceive clearly its truth and value, it is necessary to ascertain the exact sense in which the word "Imagination" is to be received.

Dictionary definitions are of little use in a case like the present, for they are usually concerned only with the more obvious and the etymological significations of words, whereas the full meaning which a term is competent to convey is often very far removed from these. Associations have grown up round it, it has from time to time been distinguished from other kindred words, men who have ventured into fresh fields of thought have employed it in new significations, and these have crystallised upon it; and so by little and little it has acquired a different aspect, and its derivative sense is sometimes entirely lost sight of. Thus it is with "Imagination." The word may be used to signify the calling up of an *image* or representation of something in the mind, but it is not merely in this sense that it is now generally employed. Most modern writers on Art have reserved it to express a much higher and subtler mental process, and indeed never use it for the act of memory, or of conception, which its etymology would appear to indicate. The reader will, no doubt, be willing to accept this and other words in a special sense, if not altogether, yet at least for the purposes of the present inquiry.

Now there are two kinds of thought—one which

is merely recipient, another which is creative. The former perceives facts merely as facts, the other invests them with something of its own, and even originates new facts of a certain order for itself. Thus a poet (a "maker") is not merely a man gifted with keen perception; he must also *feel* what he perceives, and that in such a way that it may receive a certain colouring from passing through his mind. He must, in short, idealise facts.

It does not at all follow that this ideal perception gives a false aspect to the things it deals with. It sees in them all that the most prosaic intellect can, but it also sees something more. It adds to the external facts certain mental and emotional truths, which are just as true as, and perhaps more important than, the outward verities which other minds perceive. The poet has no part nor lot with those disciples of modern philosophy who would regard man as merely a registering machine for noting down phenomena and sorting its notes afterwards. He recognises certain subtle sympathies which bind together all the members of the human race in one vast family, and he thinks it worth while to examine how his facts will touch them. If the things which he is dealing with are not of a character to arouse his emotions, he will set before us how they have impressed his intellect, but in any case he will give not only the objective, but also the subjective view of the facts. Poetry is essentially human, and the design of the poet is to show forth the human side of all things. He deals less with bare descriptions of the facts than with the effects which have been pro-

duced upon his mind by what he describes. If his mind is healthy, things will not strike him falsely; but if he has a great mind, he will see more in the facts than other people, and will dive deep below the surface for truths which might else for ever lie hid. Then, too, the poet will so arrange and illustrate his facts that their force and beauty will become more apparent; and though he deals only with Nature and with truth, will thus gradually build and people what is to ordinary men a new world.

We have called this faculty of evoking, perceiving, and combining, which lies at the root of Poetry, "Imagination," and we are now in a position to define it. Briefly, we may say that it is *the psychical aspect of facts*, the exponent of thought, passion, emotion, and spontaneous mental activity.

The subject of the Imagination has been ably treated by Wordsworth, Leigh Hunt, and Ruskin (amongst other writers), and the reader may be referred to them for many interesting illustrations of its nature and modes of operation. The two former, however, are concerned entirely with Verbal Poetry, and Mr Ruskin, while also frequently referring to Verbal Poetry, is chiefly occupied with the influence of the Imagination in Painting and Sculpture: it remains to consider it as an element which enters into the constitution of all the arts.

A subtle but important distinction has been drawn between two operations of the mind which are commonly included under the general term "Imagination"—viz., Imagination proper, and Fancy. They are varieties of the same mental faculty, one being an

inferior form of the other. Imagination proper may be defined as the disregard of lower and more obvious truths, for the sake of higher and spiritual verities. It does not contradict these lower truths, but it passes them by, or uses them merely as its instruments. Fancy deals with the outward form, but not with dry appearances only ; it is concerned with the ideas and comparisons which they suggest. Fancy affects the mind, Imagination the heart. In each it is to be observed that the attention is drawn away from the facts, but in both cases with the object of sending us back to them with increased appreciation. Fancy flits over the surface, suggesting this and that thought, by which the true aspect and beauty of the thing become more intensely realised. Imagination passes by and through the fact, only that we may ever after see it as the clothing of a deeper truth, the body of a vital soul. If we are not drawn away from the facts at all, the process which results can be neither Fancy nor Imagination, but bare description, or at best invention. Fancy is the regarding of outward form (whether material or otherwise) in its mental aspect. Imagination is the transcending of that form for the sake of the further truth which may be perceived within. An example or two will make the matter clear. Here is Fancy :—

“ All at once I saw a crowd,
A host of *golden* daffodils
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,
Fluttering and *dancing* in the breeze.
Continuous as the stars that shine
And twinkle on the Milky Way,
They stretched in never-ending line

Along the margin of a bay.
Ten thousand saw I at a glance,
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance."

This is a clear and vigorous account of the *outside* of the flowers. It deals only with their appearance, but it is not mere description ; for their appearance is illustrated by subtle references to other objects, and automatic action is attributed to them. They are golden in colour, and dance, and toss their heads. Now for the Imagination :—

"The waves beside them danced, but they
Outdid the sparkling waves *in glee*.
A poet could not but be gay
In such a jocund company."

We have now got beyond the outside, and reached a further truth. Not that flowers are really capable of feeling joy, but that beauty and perfection, freedom and grace of motion, are the proper associations of gladness, and cannot but convey delight to a healthily constituted mind :—

"Oft when on my couch I lie,
In vacant, or in pensive mood,
They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude.
And then *my heart with pleasure fills,*
And dances with the daffodils."

But we may go deeper still. Flowers are not only bright and beautiful, and therefore rightly delightful, but they are God's creatures, sustained by His hand, and ever showing forth His wisdom and goodness. And so Herrick can address them thus :—

"Fair daffodils, we weep to see
You haste away so soon,

As yet the early rising sun
 Has not attained his noon.
 Stay, stay,
 Until the hasting day
 Has run
 But to the even-song,
 And *having prayed together*, we
 Will go with you along."

This kind of Imagination which goes to the root of things, and unfolds hidden truths connected with them, is the highest of all. The simplest facts may become attractive when a human interest is imparted to them. Of whatever kind the feeling is, the deeper it goes the better.

"To sport with Amaryllis in the shade,
 Or with the tangles of Nœcera's hair."

This is Fancy, and it does not move us greatly. We readily give our assent to Milton's scorn of such toying. But we cannot but feel some sympathy with Lovelace singing from prison:—

"When love with unconfined wings
 Hovers within my gates,
 And my divine Althea brings
 To whisper at the grates;
 When *I lie tangled* in her hair,
 And fettered to her eye,
 The birds, that wanton in the air,
 Know no such liberty."

It is love that gives the outward grace its charm here, and it touches our hearts accordingly.

The object of the poet is truth, but truth regarded from a particular point of view. For example, a man in distress is not always a very dignified object. His actions, even his words, are often in themselves poor,

and neither beautiful nor sublime. We have to take them in connection with the subject which excites them; and this, if it is worthy of sympathy, will not fail to dignify his conduct in our eyes. Now, the poet must either go straight to the passion itself, describing it without its external manifestations, or he must describe those external facts in such a manner as to draw our minds to the moral and spiritual facts which they serve to clothe. Thus, to take an instance of real poetry from a so-called "prose" work, what affects us so strongly in Dickens' description of Mr Peggotty's grief at the loss of "little Em'ly," is the manner in which the sudden desolation is depicted which at that moment sinks into his spirit. We have just been laughing at the genial glee of the fine old fellow. His rough language and quaint mode of expression are not allowed to prevent our appreciation of his honest affection, but their exuberance is comical in the extreme. Suddenly the news of Em'ly's departure, and of her shame, falls like a thunderbolt into the little house-boat. The touches of description are few and simple, but the agonising chill at the poor fellow's heart appeals to us all as we read. Still he and his talk in their rough fisher-folk's way, but the humour has died out of it. Still are we conscious of the close imitation which the author gives us of the queer Norfolk dialect, but we laugh at it no more. The mode in which the sensitive fibre of our sympathy is touched may be difficult to ascertain—it may, perhaps, be indefinable—but the thing is done, and though we may hardly know what it is that prevents such a passage from becom-

ing in any way ludicrous, we feel that the line of demarcation is very widely drawn indeed.

Both Fancy and Imagination may, of course, be employed in different ways—sometimes in perception and description, sometimes in contemplation of a fact whose nature is already grasped by the mind, sometimes in association of ideas.* But the great distinction given above will be found to hold good through all the varied operations of the two faculties, and it would unnecessarily complicate the subject to introduce any further divisions of it. When Shelley sings of the skylark, the facts he has to deal with are very simple:—

“ Higher still and higher
From the earth thou springest.

And singing still dost soar, and soaring ever singest.”

Now, see how the Fancy will play around this:—

“ The pale purple even
Melts around thy flight.
Like a star of heaven,
In the broad daylight

Thou art unseen, but yet I hear thy shrill delight.”

We seem directly to see the bird lessening as it soars, until we lose the tiny speck altogether. And when the songster is out of sight, how does Fancy describe the melody which is still poured down? First by comparing sound with light:—

“ All the earth and air
With thy voice is loud,

* Cf. Ruskin, *Modern Painters*, part iii. sect. ii. chaps. i.–iv.

As, when night is bare,
From one lonely cloud
The moon rains out her beams, and heaven is overflowed.

“What thou art we know not.
What is most like thee?
From rainbow clouds there flow not
Drops so bright to see,
As from thy presence showers a rain of melody.

“Like a glow-worm golden
In a dell of dew,
Scattering, unbeholden,
Its aerial hue
Among the flowers and grass which screen it from the view.”

And by comparing sound with scent:—

“Like a rose embowered
In its own green leaves,
By warm winds deflowered,
Till the scent it gives
Makes faint with too much sweet those heavy-winged thieves.”

And by comparing the bird's music with a love-song:—

“Like a high-born maiden
In a palace tower,
Soothing her love-laden
Soul in secret hour
With music sweet as love, which overflows her bower.”

All this and much more prepares us for the Imagination, which asks no more what the sound is *like*, but what feelings it suggests. Such rich melody, it says, must have a source in some rapturous emotion.

“Teach us, sprite or bird,
What sweet thoughts are thine.

What objects are the fountains
Of thy happy strain?

What fields, or waves, or mountains ?
 What shapes of sky or plain ?
 What love of thine own kind ? what ignorance of pain ?

“ Waking or asleep,
 Thou of death must deem
 Things more true and deep
 Than we mortals dream,
 Or how could thy notes flow in such a crystal stream ? ”

The poet cannot believe that any creature doomed to die could sing thus, and therefore the bird is separated from the category, “ we mortals.”

“ We look before and after,
 And pine for what is not :
 Our sincerest laughter
 With some pain is fraught :
 Our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thought.

“ Yet if we could scorn
 Hate, and pride, and fear ;
 If we were things born
 Not to shed a tear,
 I know not how thy joy we ever could come near.

“ Teach me half the gladness
 That thy brain must know,
 Such harmonious madness
 From my lips would flow,
 The world should listen then, as I am listening now.”

Such are the operations of the Fancy and Imagination, when employed in contemplating a fact which is brought before them. The former surrounds it with a bevy of resemblances and illustrations, the latter deals only with the feelings and passions which the subject suggests. It tints everything with its own hue. The lark's song is no mere bird's voice,

but the expression and reflection of the hearer's mood.
So that at another time a poet will cry :—

" It is the lark that sings so out of tune,
Straining harsh discords and unpleasing sharps."

If we contrast with this an instance of the employment of the same faculties in the *evoking* of truths, we shall find the same distinction between the Fancy and the Imagination apparent. Wordsworth's "She was a Phantom of Delight" was probably written with the design of illustrating this very point. It is when first the poet sees his lady that she seems

" A lovely apparition, sent
To be a moment's ornament,
Her eyes as stars of twilight fair,
Like twilight's too her dusky hair."

This, and such as this, is as much as the Fancy can do for us, but the poet goes on :—

" I saw her upon nearer view,
A spirit, yet a woman too.
A countenance in which did meet
Sweet records, promises as sweet ;
A creature not too bright or good
For human nature's daily food."

This is truth as far as it goes, but it is possible to go further :—

" And now I see with eye serene
The very pulse of the machine ;
A being breathing thoughtful breath,
A traveller betwixt life and death ;
A perfect woman, nobly planned
To warn, to comfort, and command ;
And yet a spirit still, and bright
With something of an angel light."

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However the Imagination may effect its object, whether by association or comparison of ideas, by dexterous substitution of one idea for another, or what not, the functions of its two branches remain the same. The two often pass into each other, however, by insensible degrees; so that it is not always easy to decide at once to which a particular passage belongs. Let us see, for example, how the Imagination may be gradually developed about such a subject as sunrise.

“ Till the dappled dawn doth rise,”

says Milton in one place, giving thus a simple but pleasantly suggestive picture. Elsewhere he allows his Fancy further play :—

“ Till *civil-suited* Morn appear,
Not trick'd and frounc'd as she was wont
With the Attic boy to hunt,
But kerchief'd in a comely cloud.”

This has merely to do with the outward appearance, but the direction taken by the Fancy is determined by the sober tone of the subject, and in its place touches us with something of the quiet feeling which pervades the rest of the poem. A different action of the Imagination is shown when Shakspeare writes :—

“ Night's candles are burnt out, and *jocund* day
Stands tiptoe on the misty mountain-tops.”

The second line is a case of the Fancy, and the Imagination of the first line has nothing to do with the state of mind of the speaker, for in the passage which immediately precedes it this different colouring shows itself thus :—

“ Look, love, what *envious* streaks
Do lace the severing clouds in yonder east.”

Thus may the poet perceive in sky and cloud some sympathy with himself, but to call the dawn *envious* because it is the signal for parting, touches no more than the outward connection between two events, and there is yet room for a deeper and more solemn thought; the broad western glory of the evening sky, which to one man is merely a "belt of gold," speaks to another's heart:—

"The clouds that gather round the setting sun
Do take a sober colouring from an eye
That hath kept watch o'er man's mortality."

The distinction between the outward form and the inward spirit is not by any means confined to material things and their associations. Our thoughts and emotions themselves may also be looked upon from the two points of view. Thus Dr Johnson, writing about Cardinal Wolsey's ambition, uses this metaphor:—

"Still to *new heights* his restless wishes *tow'r*."

This, though it deals with a passion, reaches merely the surface of it. It conveys a sense of the growing and insatiable character of Ambition, but of this only. Shakspeare, writing on the same subject, deals with it very differently:—

"Fling away ambition,
By that *sin* fell the angels; how can man, then,
The image of his Maker, hope to win by it?"

We notice, moreover, that both the Fancy and the Imagination may be employed about the same subject with very different results. This follows as a natural

consequence from the definition of these faculties given above. If they consist in the modification or rather the colouring of fact by the mental atmosphere through which it is presented to the view, the nature of that modification, the particular hue so imparted, will, of course, depend upon the character and mood of the poet. The same thing will strike one man in one light and another differently. It should never be forgotten that truth is many-sided, and the poet cannot, any more than other men, show us all sides of it at once. He can turn one face towards us, and point out to us what he sees therein. This may be truth as far as it goes, but not often the whole truth. Another man will perhaps see more in this very aspect of the subject, whilst a third will turn it altogether round and show us a fresh face of it. All men who have thought deeply have thought about Death, but how differently has it affected them! Sometimes (with the lesser men) it is the inevitableness and sadness of Death which have struck the mind:—

“ Then die ! that she
The common fate of all things rare
May read in thee,—
How small a part of time they share
That are so wondrous sweet and fair.”

Sometimes it is the chill and gloom which the loss of those dear to us occasions:—

“ Over valley and wold,
Wherever I turn my head,
There's a mildew and a mould ;

The sun's going out overhead,
And I'm very old,
And Tommy's dead."

Then there is the awful thought of its irrevocable nature:—

"Put out the light, and then—put out the light?
If I quench thee, thou flaming minister,
I can again thy former light restore,
Should I repent me:—but once put out thine,
Thou cunningest pattern of excelling nature,
I know not where is that Promethean heat
That can thy light relume."

Or, again, there is the appalling *mystery* of the King of Terrors:—

"The other shape,
If shape it might be call'd that shape had none.
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.
What *seem'd* his head
The *likeness* of a kingly crown had on."

"That warrior on his strong war-horse, fire flashes through his eyes, force dwells in his arm and heart: but warrior and war-horse are a vision; a revealed Force, nothing more. Stately they tread the Earth, as if it were a firm substance; fool! the Earth is but a film; it cracks in twain, and warrior and war-horse sink beyond plummet's sounding. Plummet's? Fantasy herself will not follow them. A little while ago, they were not; a little while, and they are not, their very ashes are not."

But to others, Death—mysterious and awful indeed—is still something more than mere destruction. To one it is at least the Revealer of Secrets:—

"The shadow cloak'd from head to foot,
Who keeps the keys of all the creeds."

While another poet, with less passion, perhaps, but

with a deeper faith, breaks forth into the exulting cry:—

“THERE IS NO DEATH ! what seems so is transition.
This life of mortal breath
Is but a suburb of the life Elysian,
Whose portal we call Death.”

Surely all these are instances of the legitimate employment of the Imagination, and are not the less valuable because they differ so widely in their scope and purpose.

The instances of Fancy and Imagination given above have all been selected from Verbal Poetry, as therein the subtle distinctions between the two and between their modes of operation can be most readily presented to the reader. But if the view above taken of Art and of Poetry is worth anything, we shall be able to carry the present investigation into each of the other arts. They have each some special class of ideas to convey; but in all, the value and nobility of the art consist in the impress of the artist's mind, which is, or ought to be, stamped upon his work. If he has nothing to tell us, no thoughts or passions to express, his work is not worthy of being called Art at all; it is merely skilled labour. The Imagination displayed in some departments of Fine Art is, however, of a subtler kind than that illustrated above, depending upon perceptions of Beauty and Sublimity in the world around us, of which we shall have more to say presently. Its effect, at any rate, is sufficiently apparent. In Architecture, for instance, we feel in a moment the difference between the work of different men. One can

grasp nothing more than the fact that he has got to build certain rooms, provided with certain apertures for light, egress, &c. He constructs arches because they are strong, but with no feeling for their beauty. Another man overlays his arches with crockets and fills them up with elaborate tracery, and yet gives little pleasure to a simple, thoughtful mind. At best, his perception of the beauty possible to his work reaches no further than the Fancy. He has got into his head certain notions as to the fitness of this or that point for receiving ornament, and he thrusts his decoration into prominence accordingly without caring for it in the least. He knows that his work ought to be beautiful, and, as far as head-work will make it so, he does his best, but his feelings never really come into play at all. A great architect gives us no more, perhaps, than a very simple arrangement of contours, but there is a subtle loveliness in them, and a subtle sympathy between them, that touch our hearts most effectually.

Or, again, in Music: the difference between fanciful and imaginative treatment will be recognised at once, if the passage at the end of the introduction to Ascher's "*Chant des Naiades*" be compared with the similar passage in the same key, and commencing on the same note, in Beethoven's valse in E flat (No. 15 of Boosey's edition).

So, too, in Painting.* John Crome takes a bit of bare heath with a cart-track over it. No trees—no houses—only a few cattle and an old shepherd—a

* The paintings referred to in this chapter are all in the National Gallery.

bank of brown earth, with a few common weeds in the foreground, and a glow of late afternoon in the sky; and, lo! there is a beautiful picture. Canaletto, at Venice, makes elaborate paintings of that wonderful city of the sea, but gives us nothing but blue-green sky and blue-green water (which we know to be intended for water, only because there are boats upon it and reflections in it), and a number of cold portraits of houses and churches. The whole thing stale, flat, and emphatically unprofitable. Turner's Venices in the National Gallery are not in his best manner, and are much marred by the eccentricity, or, as some would say, the impaired sight of his later years, but he has still something to tell us about the sun and sky and sea, which we might never have noticed for ourselves—some new glory of light and colour to reveal to us.

Still, not only the expression of Beauty, but also that of more definite thought has its place in other arts than Verbal Poetry. This was the source of the strength of the early pre-Raffaellite painters. External facts were little to them. Indeed, they seldom tried to express them with any great accuracy. They knew, of course, perfectly well, that S. Peter never wore a triple crown, and that S. Stephen did not usually go about balancing stones upon his head and shoulders. But that the former was the head of the Church and the first bishop of the Papal See, and that the latter suffered martyrdom by being stoned to death, were facts of infinitely greater importance in their view than the mere details of the dress which they actually wore on earth, or of the

personal appearance of either Apostle or Deacon. The aim of the painter was, first of all, to let every one know whom his picture was intended to represent, and then to suggest such facts in the saint's history as he considered most worthy of being borne in mind ; and, finally, to give his own conception of what the features and expression of the person thus set forth must have been. The circumstance that S. Peter was only a rough Galilean fisherman, and an unlearned and ignorant man, did not affect him in the least. It was equally a fact to him, and one of infinitely greater consequence, that our Lord had committed unto him the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven, and founded His Church upon him as upon a rock. So he vested him in a gorgeous ecclesiastical robe, and put two keys into his hand, and studded the tiara upon his head and the rings upon his fingers with gems ; and for greater impressiveness he did not paint the latter, but fixed real stones upon the picture. As for S. Stephen, he could conceive no better way of honouring him than by displaying the stones of his martyrdom ; and he gave him the martyr's palm to carry in his hand. These were his greatest glory, and these were the facts that were most real to the painter's mind, and with earnest faith and feeling of this, the artist set himself with all his power to express so much as he was able of that countenance, which they of the council once beheld as it had been the face of an angel.

It happens, indeed, very often that the men who have the most to say, and express it best, are the men who most frankly disregard the outside appear-

ance of their subject. Gerard Douw and Van Mieris take infinite pains to paint a shop with hares and birds and cabbages therein. They give you the lace upon the shopwoman's cap, and the very texture of the cloths and feathers which lie beside her, so that a microscope will hardly detect a flaw. They afford an instance of the most careful and most servile copying of the minutest details of form—but the chief emotion which their pictures awaken is that of wonder how they were done. Carlo Crivelli also takes the greatest pains with the details of his pictures, but with very different purpose and result. He sets himself, for instance, to paint the Annunciation. The great fact present to his mind is the infinite honour and dignity conferred upon the Blessed Virgin. He is, of course, aware that she was a simple Jewish peasant maiden; but then if he expounds this fact, he will fail in obtaining due appreciation for the other, which is to him much the more important of the two. So he represents the Virgin as kneeling at prayer in a chamber of a large house which he adorns with vases of flowers, a peacock, &c. The Angel kneels without at a grated window, bearing a lily, and in the attitude of blessing. A golden ray descends from heaven bearing the Holy Dove to the Virgin. As the house wall comes in the way here, the painter cuts a hole in it, and lets the glory through. Some people pass to and fro in the outer court—for this is a matter which should be inwrought into everyday life—and a little child at the top of some steps peeps round the corner, to see what is going on. The artist wishes to

clothe his personages in rich dresses, but he knows nothing about Eastern costume, so he adopts without scruple the Italian fashions of the fifteenth century. Then, in order that the good people of Ascoli (for whose convent the picture was painted) may realise their own share in the results of the great and mysterious event which he is recording, he places S. Emidius, the patron saint of the city, by the Angel's side, and gives him a model of Ascoli to hold in his hand, that all may know who he is. To do further honour to his subject, he decks it all with the richest colour, and overlays such portions of his picture as he can with gold-leaf. Now, it would be foolish to object to this painting, that it is not in the least like the actual scene. Nobody ever pretended that it was. The painter had certain ideas and feelings to represent, and represented *them* as best he could; and his method had this advantage, that his main object was almost sure to be gained. People could hardly fail to see what he meant; whereas the nearer he approached to the actual external facts, the less chance was there that his own individual feeling about them would be recognised, and the greater likelihood that the lessons of the scene would be altogether thrown away.

Of course, there are the same differences between the functions and degrees of the Imagination in Painting that there are in Poetry. One painter, though he has Fancy of a certain kind, may yet go no further than the outside of his subject, whilst another may pass within. Guercino's angels, weeping over the dead body of Christ, may be better drawn than

Francia's, and their wings are very feathery, but they merely weep, and lean their heads in hopeless abandonment to grief. One of Francia's angels, though the eyes are red with tears, yet has the lips parted with a wondrous smile, and gazes far away.

If it be found that this Imagination has its place in all the forms of Poetry, then its presence or absence will supply a test of the true greatness or degradation of Art. We cannot at least be wrong in applying to the thought and feeling displayed in a work of art the ordinary rules by which we should test its moral or intellectual value in our everyday lives. Thus, there can hardly (one would think) be two opinions about Teniers' picture of Dives in Hell. The painter's idea of Hell appears to be made up of fishes that swim in air and spit fire, or crawl with human limbs upon the ground and smoke clay pipes; dwarfs with beast-legs, playing the guitar; apes that carry candles stuck in brooms, or play tunes upon their elongated noses; beasts with fleshless skulls, and men who play bagpipes and carry candles in funnels on their heads,—a few flames making an infernal background. The temper of a man who could paint a picture like this must surely have been different from that of Angelico, painting, upon a background of beaten gold, the Saviour of the world in heaven, with the Cross upon the banner which He holds, *and the Cross upon the glory round His brow*:—angels and saints surrounding Him, the beauty of holiness beaming from their faces, and the tokens of their service and their martyrdom in their hands.

It must not be forgotten, in applying this test, that

the Imagination is Protean—now acting in thought, now through form, colour, sound. A simple scene may become in a painter's hands instinct with beauty of hue, light, and shade, which we by ourselves might never have perceived. The artist cries to us, "Look at this," "Look at that," in Nature; and we have only to demand that it shall *be* Nature; not necessarily, nor even possibly, the whole of Nature, but one aspect of her. Constable is said to have remarked, "I never saw an ugly thing in my life; for let the form of a thing be what it may, light, shade, and perspective will always make it beautiful." It is the function of the painter to point out to us this beauty, to expound the loveliness of common things. In the same way the musician, the architect, and the sculptor have no mere mechanical work to do in the arranging of their tones and stones. They have to find out the poetry which lurks within these their materials, and bring it forth to view. And whether discovering, explaining, or illustrating—this Imagination is ever emphatically true. Falsehood is always, and under all circumstances, vile; and the Imagination would be a deadly faculty if, as some people think, it could in its fullest development tell us nothing but lies. But *fiction*, at least, some one will say, whether of poet or novelist, must be untrue. Not so. It may not be true that men bearing such and such names did actually, at a certain given time and place, pass through such and such adventures, and say such and such words; but if the story is worth the paper it is written on, it will still be true—true to higher and more important facts, the facts of human nature,

unchanging, though the men who wear it change ; the facts of moral excellence, and the relations between the creatures of this lower world and the mystery of that which is unseen. Mr Carlyle, in his wonderful book, "Sartor Resartus," shows how we are wrapped round with clothes (whether robes or rags) of various kinds. Not only does the material apparel oft proclaim the man, not only may many of the darlings and the potentates of the world be discovered to be after all nothing more than animated clothes-horses, but there are garments of the mind as well as of the body—cloaks of prejudice and education, covering the real character—and when these are stripped away, still are we far from the essence of the man's being. There is an inner germ of which our thoughts themselves are but the clothes, a soul underlying the very mind which makes us conscious of its possession. Artists would do well to consider these things ; for one of the most important functions of Art is to strip from the truths of Nature and the souls of men their cloaks of accidents and prejudices. The rich plains, the wild sea, the gloomy, rifted hills, are but the mute expression of God's grace and power ; the highest loveliness of humanity is but the faint gleam of His image ; and the sculptor or the painter who perceives it not, had better leave his rocks unchiselled, for in the rough stones there are sermons, and let his canvas be made into useful sailcloth to help forward those who occupy their business in great waters, for they at least may see the works of the Lord and His wonders in the deep.

CHAPTER III.

BEAUTY AND SUBLIMITY.

IT was remarked in the last chapter that the Imagination may display itself in Art in certain subtle ways distinct from definite thought. That is to say, the artist may show forth his own feelings and influence the feelings of others, without any direct teaching, or any distinct association of ideas. We proceed to inquire more particularly how this is to be effected. We must now view Art as the exponent of *emotion*; and we see at once that if it is to be great and noble, the emotion which it expresses must be great and noble too. Now, of things which are capable of being conveyed by Art, there are only two classes calculated to arouse feelings of this kind; and they are comprehended under the general terms, the Beautiful and the Sublime. The subjects of Art may be pleasing or terrible, but they must never be mean or commonplace.

A difficulty meets us here at the very outset, namely, that of fixing upon any standard of taste in such matters. The popular notion of Taste is that it is necessarily altogether erratic and inconstant. To say that a thing is "quite a matter of taste," is to imply

that any opinions may be held about it indifferently, that its real character cannot be settled and agreed upon. Most persons, however, who have thought about the subject at all deeply, have come to the opposite conclusion, viz., that some things *are* beautiful, and that if we are healthily constituted we shall perceive them to be so; and that others *are* unlovely, and that we ought not to enjoy them at all. It is, indeed, very clear that different people like different things; that what is a source of the most intense pleasure to one man, awakens no feelings of any kind in another, and disgusts a third; but it does not follow that the subject is indifferent, and that the opinion of one person upon it is as good as that of another. The fact of disagreement may merely prove that this man is more obtuse than that; that his feelings have been blunted, or that he is naturally a man of less sensibility; or that the other has acquired tastes which he has not. For, of course, we may come to like anything in time; as, for instance, people may bring themselves to enjoy the flavour of a nauseous drug. It is nauseous still to every palate which has not been vitiated by its misuse. It seems only reasonable to believe that the impression which a vigorous and healthy mind receives from the contemplation of material objects is, like its other impressions, subject to fixed and ascertainable laws, and not due to circumstances altogether capricious and variable. If it were otherwise, there would, of course, be no use in writing about Art at all (unless it were possible to regard it as exclusively didactic, in the common sense of that term); nor would there be any reason why we should

prefer one poem, or picture, or building to another, except our own passing fancy, or the fickle breath of popular applause. The very fact that we speak of "good taste" and "bad taste," and generally conceive ourselves to be possessed of the former, shows that we do practically recognise some criterion, although we may theoretically deny its existence, or at least may profess ourselves unable to define it. The subject is no doubt a difficult one, and presents many complications; but a little thought will enable us at least to settle some principles which may guide us in our inquiries.

Various theories have been put forward as to the nature of Beauty, and of the qualities which we need to enable us to judge it rightly. Three principal ones require to be noticed. The first makes Taste a matter of the Intellectual, the second of the Physical, and the third of the Moral nature.

According to the first, good or bad taste is a question of judgment; we are said to find a thing beautiful when we detect in it a fitness to fulfil certain purposes, an adaptation of its parts to one another; or when in works of art we perceive an exact resemblance to the objects they are supposed to represent, or an accurate delineation of human character. But all this is in reality a matter, not of Taste, but of Science. Knowledge is a great thing to possess, and any opportunity of applying it may be the occasion of an exquisite pleasure; but because an object calls forth our admiration, it does not follow that it is beautiful; it may be interesting, and at the same time ugly. Nor does it follow that the man who possesses the most correct

judgment is the man of the greatest taste ; he may be able to perceive similarities and uses and the connection of ideas, and yet may care nothing about sensible objects in themselves ; just as a judge may decide a case, and find a pleasure in applying the subtleties of the law, without feeling the slightest personal interest in either plaintiff or defendant. We must on no account confuse an emotional distaste for a thing because it is not beautiful, with an intellectual dislike to it because it is not useful, or is deformed, or is incorrect. Any evidence that the artist has failed to perceive the characteristics of what he is trying to represent, any misrepresentation on his part, offends us ; but this is either because we feel that he has thereby omitted or degraded something beautiful, or else because his error displays a want of due sensibility and refinement, or, worse still, a carelessness about truth. But when it is evident that his failure to present every actual feature of his subject does not proceed from ignorance, but from deliberate choice, and when that choice is the fruit of a healthy and exalted sentiment, we are anything but disgusted. If a man were to try to represent an oak, and made it lithe and bending like a willow, we should not enjoy the result ; but when an architectural sculptor takes a bough of either tree, and treats it conventionally, preserving some characteristics and deliberately rejecting others as unsuitable to his purpose, his work may be in all respects good and satisfactory, though it would utterly fail as an exact representation of the leaves which suggested it. A mere intellectual judgment may help us to collect the materials for

an estimate of Beauty, but cannot, by itself, constitute Taste.

Another class of theorists would take the perception of Beauty altogether out of the region of mind, and make it wholly a physical affair. This view finds much favour with the prevalent materialism of the present day; but though the idea which lies at the root of it is true up to a certain point, it is by no means the whole truth, and must be accepted with great caution. According to this theory, a beautiful or an ugly object or sound affects our optic or auditory nerves in precisely the same way that a sweet or bitter flavour affects our palate. In each instance certain molecular changes are introduced, which may be agreeable or the reverse. Burke, in his essay on "The Sublime and Beautiful," asserts that the immediate cause of terror, or a feeling of danger or pain (with which he classes all forms of Sublimity), is a *tension* of the organs affected. That of pleasure (including the sense of Beauty) is a *relaxation*. Thus darkness, he says, is terrible and sublime, because the eye is strained almost to the verge of pain. Beautiful objects are small, smooth, and delicate—and so forth. Now, there can be little doubt that some such physical cause is the source of the pleasure which simple and abstract Beauty conveys to us. We find, for instance, that some colours are more beautiful than others, that a curved line is more beautiful than a straight one, that the *timbre* of an organ is more beautiful than that of a concertina, and both than the tones of a hurdy-gurdy. In each of these cases the effect must obviously depend

upon pleasurable or painful excitation of certain parts of our nervous system. We know that sound is caused by a vibration of the air, which is communicated to the interior of the ear, and reported to the brain by means of nerves. If, therefore, the sound appears to us harsh and unpleasing, it must be because the particular kind of vibration which is connected with it is painful to us. According to modern theories, the effects of light, and consequently of all visible objects, are produced by similar vibrations of an ether which is supposed to pervade all space. If so, the agreeable or disagreeable impressions of the objects of sight must, in like manner, proceed from the pleasing or painful effect produced by these vibrations upon the retina, and thence communicated to the brain. The operation of a simple colour must be similar to that of a simple tone, that of a contour to that of a melody, that of a complex form, or a combination of colours, to that of a musical harmony.

A numerous class of philosophers, at the present day, push the inquiry into our physical pleasures and dislikes somewhat further back; they derive them from a sort of inherited association of ideas. Immediate association of ideas, without doubt, influences our feelings on all subjects to a very great extent. But it must be obviously eliminated from any inquiry into the permanent characteristics of Beauty, since it is, by its very nature, an inconstant and variable factor. Did the sense of Beauty depend upon the circumstances, past or present, which may happen to be connected with the object in the mind,

it would be different to each man, and no general conclusion would be possible with regard to it. But the modern theorists suggest that the physical effects which external objects are competent to arouse are due to the fact that, sometime or other in the history of our race, such objects were connected with the necessities, conveniences, or dangers of life ; that they thus came to be associated with pleasure or pain, as the case might be, and that throughout the progress of time and of human development, the same likes and dislikes have attended them, though the causes which originally aroused the feelings have long ceased to exist. Thus it is asserted that all music was originally vocal. We are told that the influence of Music is due, either to our own recollections of countless emotions which we have expressed in similar vocal form, and sympathised with when thus expressed by others, or to our inheritance of a like association between certain feelings and certain sounds. One writer points out that transitions to the octave and fifth are vocally easiest after those to adjacent tones ; and this he asserts to be the reason for their common occurrence in music ; and he lays it down that harmony was originally suggested by the sympathetic utterances of different persons. Surely all this is somewhat far-fetched. It is difficult to believe that in listening to a sonata of Beethoven's, the pleasure we derive from each chord and each strain of melody is due to some recondite connection with the voices of our ancestors, or perhaps with the cries uttered by our remote simian progenitors. The simple physical fact that every

note and every chord depend upon vibrations of a certain character, which are transmitted to the ear, and may be agreeable or the reverse, offers a much more simple and satisfactory explanation of the phenomena. On the whole, it seems quite as likely that the influence of voice is due to its music, as that the power of Music depends on its association with voice. However this may be, the further discussion of this aspect of the question may well be left to the philosophers. It may be interesting enough to learn how our preference for certain colours, and forms, and sounds may be traced to habits and instincts connected with food and warmth, on the part of the savages or the monkeys from whom our scientific friends tell us we are descended, but it has little practical bearing upon the question of Taste among ourselves. However our æsthetic sensibilities may have arisen in the first instance, they have now become a matter of constitution; and even if it can be shown that association of ideas produced our sensations of Beauty in the past, as it is competent to warp them in the present, it is with our physical and mental constitution, as it stands, that we have at present to do.

But it does not at all follow, that because our ideas of Beauty and the like are constitutional, therefore there can be no right or wrong in them, that each man is at liberty to take his own fancies and predilections as his standard, and consider them to be as good as another's. Any mental or moral peculiarity may be inherited, and every one has a certain character naturally belonging to him. But we recognise a moral

right and wrong, for all that. The reason in both cases is, that inclinations may be modified by cultivation. A wrong natural bias may be corrected, a craving for ignoble gratification may be overcome. This is the reason why some writers on Art have called Taste a moral quality — which is the third theory we have to consider.

It may occur to some readers that, in speaking of Beauty hitherto, we have confined ourselves wholly to physical Beauty, and have not yet spoken of the graces of the mind. It has been urged that these latter are called beautiful in a metaphorical signification only, and that the word "Beauty" does not apply strictly to anything which does not strike our outward senses ; but the common consent of mankind has agreed to use the term as applicable to both material and immaterial objects, and a little consideration will show us that a similar mental process is involved in each case.

Beauty may, in fact, be defined as "the Lovable." The synonym "loveliness" expresses this very clearly. When a person attracts us strongly, when his character seems to harmonise with our own, when what he does and what he says seem to us good and fitting, and, without requiring any minute analysis, produce in us an instinctive feeling of pleasure and satisfaction, we say that we love him. In precisely the same way, when the qualities of material things affect us pleasantly upon simple inspection, without requiring us to reason about them, when they seem to harmonise with the natural constitution of our senses, we call them beautiful. We are equally correct in talking of the

"beauty" of our friend's character, since it affects us in the same way. We may reason about either the moral or material qualities, and admire them on solely intellectual grounds; but then we do not call them beautiful. We may perceive that a man is clever and upright, and yet may not love him; we may see clearly that an object is useful, and appreciate highly its fitness for its purpose, without feeling it to be in any way beautiful. The essence of Beauty, therefore, would seem to lie in its affecting us with pleasure *immediately and intuitively*. If we have to think and argue with ourselves about it, it is not beautiful to us. A thing may seem more beautiful the more we consider it and the more we know about it, but we cannot reason ourselves into thinking it lovely. The sense of Beauty is, therefore, *the instinctive perception of goodness*. Not goodness in the sense of serviceableness, not the goodness which makes us respect a man or use a medicine that we heartily dislike; but the goodness which appeals directly to our capacity for pain and pleasure, and does not fail to arouse the latter. It was once pronounced of all Nature, "Behold, it was very good;" but there has ever been much in Nature that is not directly useful, and whose goodness consists in simple harmony with our æsthetic constitution. This is the goodness which we call material Beauty. The quality which is in similar harmony with our moral constitution we call moral Beauty.

Mr Ruskin devotes several chapters of his "Modern Painters" to showing that the characteristics of beautiful things are all, in some way, illustrative of God's nature. He mentions the following features of "Typi-

cal Beauty:" "Infinity, the type of the Divine Incomprehensibility; Unity, of the Divine Comprehensiveness; Repose, of the Divine Permanence; Symmetry, of the Divine Justice; Purity, of the Divine Energy; and Moderation, the type of Government by Law." He does not, of course, pretend that we enjoy these characteristics because we perceive them to be thus illustrative of Divine attributes. We enjoy them, if at all, instinctively; but he suggests that the instinct has been given to us in conformity with the nature of that Supreme Being in whose image he is not ashamed to believe that man was created.

Whatever we may think of this writer's mode of carrying out his principles, we can hardly be wrong, if we believe in any religion or moral responsibility at all, in holding that it is a duty incumbent upon us to exercise the various faculties with which we are endowed in such measure and in such directions as may tend most fully to develop our nature, and thus fulfil the design with which it has been bestowed upon us. If we have any real faith in the existence of a God, we shall see that it will be well for us to cultivate our taste in such a way that we may enjoy those things which He has intended us to enjoy, and hate those things which He has intended us to hate; and just as it needs no argument to prove that we ought to like the *moral* character of Raffaele's saints and angels better than that of Teniers' drunken revellers, so it should not be mere chance or individual fancy which should lead us to think one material thing more beautiful than another. We *ought* to think a

flower more beautiful than a stone, and a horse than a hippopotamus.

What, then, is the test? How are we to discover the mode in which our natural faculties should be cultivated? Simply by allowing the beauty of the world around to have its full influence with us. For our own nature does not stand alone. We are parts of a great whole, governed by uniform principles and subject to uniform laws. We can be sure of developing our æsthetic faculties in the right way only when we are following the beauty *which has been developed for us* in the world of Nature. This, at least, cannot be wrong. It will not do to pin our faith to this painter or to that theorist—either may be in error; but if our taste is in harmony with the Taste which formed and decorated this material universe of ours, we may be sure that it is not greatly at fault. If we will commune with Nature, and allow her loveliness to sink into our hearts and minds, we shall see more of that loveliness everywhere. It will grow upon us, and take its place at the root of that instinct by which alone Beauty is perceived. We cannot demonstrate the Beauty of anything, but we can bring our hearts to choose intuitively the true or the false Beauty, by submitting ourselves to the influence of Nature on the one hand, or of false and meretricious Art on the other.

But, it will be objected, Nature is not all beautiful. Was it not said, a few lines back, that a flower is more beautiful than a stone, and a horse than a hippopotamus? How, then, can Nature be the test? It is, indeed, true that the beauty of Nature is interrupted

and unequal—but the general tone of it is beautiful still. Its common aspects are all full of loveliness; and such positive ugliness as may be discovered in it is, for the most part, the manifestation of disease and decay. The fruits of these are not difficult to distinguish, and there is little risk of our mistaking them for those aspects of Nature which have been proposed for our standard of Beauty. Healthy and vigorous life is nearly always beautiful. There are, indeed, some few ugly creatures in the animal world, but they strike us as much by their contrast to the usual works of Nature as by their simple repulsiveness. It is not pretended that these creatures are beautiful, or that they are to be followed in any way as types of material loveliness. It is the work of Nature *as a whole* that is to be taken as a standard. If we have studied this faithfully, the exceptions to the general rule will strike us all the more forcibly. It is possible that the ugliness which does exist in Nature may be the result of design, and is intended to show us that the world could have been constructed just as efficiently without any regard to Beauty. An earwig is quite as admirably organised as a lace-fly; a silkworm-moth is more useful than a painted butterfly; but no one will pretend that they are equally pleasing to the eye. This serves to show that some parts of Nature have a purely æsthetic value; that her loveliness is not of necessity consequent upon her usefulness, but is something added for a distinct purpose. Only those who hold that the universe is the result of blind chance can suppose that this Beauty is not intended to be enjoyed. But if we admit that it has been provided for us by

a wiser Being than ourselves, and indeed that it proceeds from the same source as the very faculties whereby we apprehend it, then it is difficult to see where we can expect to find a higher type of excellence, or one more in harmony with our own endowments.

Further, the imperfection which we see around us may be corrected in works of art, by a study of the corresponding perfections in different examples. One animal, or one plant, may fall short of the highest standard in this or that respect; *but it is by the consideration of other plants and animals that we know what the highest standard is.* A few simple rules may be given. When any part of Nature's work affects us strongly at once with a sense of Beauty, we are sure to be right in enjoying it. The *non-useful* parts of Nature are sure to be beautiful,—such as flowers and effects of colour, and of light and shade (which latter are not useful, in the common sense of the term, so far as they are not necessary for distinctness of vision). Further, when anything in Nature strikes us as definitely ugly, we should first consider whether we have properly appreciated it. If we conclude that we do really perceive and rightly understand its material characteristics, and we still feel it to be ugly, there is a presumption that we are right in disliking it—Beauty being intended to affect us without argument. If we find, too, that it repels others in the same way that it repels us—if we find that there is nothing about it besides its merely useful qualities, and especially if we can trace its unpleasantness to the effects of disease or decrepitude, or can perceive it to be distinctly at

variance with Nature's ordinary moods — (as, for instance, the clumsiness of a gorilla is utterly unlike anything that we associate with grace or elegance in the animal world)—then we shall not probably be wrong in rejecting the object in question from the category of beautiful things.

But, on the other hand, this very imperfection and decay may give rise to a Beauty, or if not, then to a Sublimity of its own. The decaying leaves of Autumn deck the hillsides with exquisite combinations of beautiful tints: the crumbling and splitting of the rocks provide us with some of the grandest scenery in the world. And even those features of Nature which are in themselves ugly become beautiful, if we consider them rightly in their relations to other objects. An uncouth animal may play an important part in the harmony of light and shade of the landscape; the rugged, shattered remnant of an old tree-trunk may add greatly to its picturesqueness. The objectionable feature which man is obliged to banish from his canvas, Nature softens with mist and bathes in rich light, and so brings into subjection to her requirements. She will even take the grim results of man's failure and man's mischievousness, and bring out of them beautiful effects. She makes an old woman's ragged cloak a point of colour wherewith to throw into relief her own exquisite chiaroscuro. She takes the old Abbey, which man has bruised and battered, and tints its crumbling stones with her most delicate hues, hiding its wounds with a rich mantle of green.

Lastly, we must not forget that much of the failure

of Nature to supply us with ideas of Beauty may be due to our own dulness of perception. Pluck some common wayside flower, which you have passed a hundred times without so much as condescending to notice it. Examine it carefully, and you shall find its lines more delicately drawn, and its hues more exquisite in quality and gradation, than you could have fancied in a dream; verily Solomon had no such robes either in texture or design. Study the human face that you have been wont to consider plain or even repulsive, and you shall see the lights and shades of thought softly changing upon it—some gleam of fancy lurking in the smile, some glow of affection brightening the eyes.*

In short, the work of Nature is, in respect of material things, the best that we can conceive, and offers the simplest and most general test that can be assigned to our ideas of Beauty. Indeed, poets wishing to describe the beauties of Nature verbally can do no more than suggest comparisons with her own handiwork in other instances :—

“The sweetness of the violet’s deep-blue eyes,
Kissed by the breath of heaven, *seems coloured by its skies.*”

Even in the case of human form, no mere abstract description will suffice. The utmost admiration can

* If this were an evidence of moral, rather than of material Beauty, it would not, therefore, be unworthy of our regard; but the warmth of gentle and kindly feelings will avail to soften harsh features and tint dull cheeks, and produce a real physical Beauty if we will but look for it, apart from ideas of moral excellence which we may associate therewith. It is in consequence of evil lusts and passions unrestrained that a human countenance becomes positively and irredeemably repulsive.

in such case find its expression in a reference to some feature of inanimate Nature :—

“ Go, lovely rose !
Tell her that wastes her time and me,
 That now she knows,
When I resemble her to thee,
How sweet and fair she seems to be.”

Even of the “ messenger divine ” from other worlds it can but be said that

“ She sits and gazes at me
With those deep and tender eyes,
 Like the stars, so still and saint-like,
Looking downward from the skies.”

It would not be difficult to show that each of Nature's excellences is traceable to some characteristic which has its counterpart in the moral world ; and if this is so, it would appear that for an instinctive acquiescence in her work some of the corresponding moral qualities must be requisite. But without insisting upon this, it is evident that the acceptance of Nature as a standard of Beauty, and the complete subjection of our taste to her influence, demand at least a humble, teachable, and reverent spirit, and, in this view, we can hardly refuse our assent to the proposition that Taste is a moral quality. The outward characteristics with which it has to do strike, no doubt, upon our physical organs, and affect us by physical means ; but it is in the cultivation of our æsthetic powers to a *right* sensibility that the essence of Taste consists, and there is as much a right and a wrong in the doing of this, as there is in the subduing of our passions and the cultivation of our moral disposition. The

one is, of course, much less important than the other, but that is all.

We have hitherto spoken of Beauty more than of Sublimity, and have still to examine the characteristics of the latter. It may be incorrect in some cases to apply the term "beautiful" to works of Nature or of Art, although they satisfy our taste, and are in all respects worthy of our admiration. They may be grand or "sublime." If the sense of Beauty is "the instinctive perception of goodness," that of Sublimity is the instinctive perception of greatness. As was said above, those philosophers who trace our ideas of Beauty to a merely physical source tell us that Sublimity has its origin in a kind of pain or terror, and in a consequent tension of the organs affected. But "sublime" merely means, in the first instance, *high*, and "grand" merely *great*; and the fact that the terms may be applied to moral and intellectual, as well as to physical, qualities, must be borne in mind in any explanation which we may adopt. Beauty consists in such goodness as we may love—*i.e.*, such goodness as we can take in and comprehend. When the excellence transcends our powers of understanding, when we feel that it is altogether above us and beyond us, it becomes sublime. But the qualities involved must in both cases be good. Milton's Satan may indeed be sublime, but the true Satan is simply loathsome, though his power is greater than our own, and we fear him accordingly. A glacier, a rugged cliff, a tossing sea, are sublime, not because they affect us with anything like fear or pain, but because we feel them to involve a power superior to our own,

to be altogether outside our narrow limits of action and knowledge:—

“The mountains huge appear
Emergent, and their broad bare backs upheave
Into the clouds; their tops ascend the sky.”

We feel such things not only to be excellent, but to be excellent in a manner and degree which we can never grasp. Fear may, indeed, be a source of the Sublime when it is excited by an object worthy to be dreaded:—

“Mountains have fallen,
Leaving a gap in the clouds, and with the shock
Rocking their Alpine brethren, filling up
The ripe green valleys with destruction's splinters,
Damming the rivers with a sudden dash
Which crushed the waters into mist, and made
Their fountains find another channel.”

It is fear which underlies the magnificent description of the vision in the fourth chapter of the Book of Job:—

“In thoughts from the visions of the night, when deep sleep falleth on men, fear came upon me, and trembling, which made all my bones to shake. Then a spirit passed before my face; the hair of my flesh stood up: it stood still, but I could not discern the form thereof: an image was before mine eyes; there was silence, and I heard a voice, saying, Shall mortal man be more just than God? shall a man be more pure than his Maker?”

It is the sense of our own utter powerlessness and insignificance in the presence of a power which we cannot measure which gives this passage its force. All the circumstances conspire to heighten the effect:—the stillness of the night; the nameless terror before anything has been seen or heard; the indescribable

moving spirit; its standing still; the solemn stillness broken by the yet more solemn voice. If the spirit had been assigned some definite shape and form, we should have begun to measure our own powers against it, and it would have instantly lost its sublimity. Mere vulgar terror comes, of course, into an altogether different category. There is nothing grand about the feats of a foolhardy rope-dancer, though they are dangerous enough; nor is there any sublimity in the fall of a stack of chimneys, though we all try to get out of the way.

We see that the effect of Sublimity is due to the recognition of superiority, when we consider what constitutes the same quality in the moral world. Few things in literature can be more sublime than the prophet Ezekiel's account of the death of his wife:—

“Also the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Son of man, behold I take away the desire of thine eyes with a stroke, yet neither shalt thou mourn nor weep, neither shall thy tears run down. . . . So I spake unto the people in the morning, and at even my wife died; and I did in the morning as I was commanded.”

No one can read this passage without feeling the intense moral grandeur of the man who could act thus, and thus describe his action. We feel that it would be all but impossible for *us* to rise to such dignity of self-abnegation—that we can neither attain to it nor understand it.

This example suggests one feature which is generally characteristic of the Sublime, that is to say, simplicity. If anything great is broken up into a

number of smaller parts, the mind is enabled to grasp them all individually, and so loses the sense of grandeur altogether or in part. A succession of similar things may impress us with a feeling of greatness by the influence of mere number; as, for instance, a long vista of columns and arches in Architecture, which generally produces an effect of great size and grandeur. But when a profusion of different things is presented to us (as in the treasures of a museum), we take them in detail, and fail to perceive their greatness as an aggregate. But a single great object, whether mountain, sea, or sunlit sky, rarely fails to make its grandeur felt within us. So Milton, describing the going forth of Messiah against Satan and his hosts, rises highest when he expresses the Son of God and His attendant train in one grand indefinite phrase:—

“Attended by ten thousand thousand saints,
He onward came; *far off His coming shone.*”

The sublimity is quenched in a moment, when in the following lines he descends to more exact detail:—

“And twenty thousand (*I their number heard*)
Chariots of God, *half on each hand*, were seen.”

In the same manner, a multitude of minor excellences of disposition, however they may cause us to admire a man, seldom make us feel that there is any grandeur about him. It is the mighty force of some single moral quality, combining and absorbing his whole nature, which makes his character sublime. When the priest of Bethel commands Amos to leave the country, and no more disturb the king's

court with his disquieting prophecies, the sense of the greatness and power of his commission, notwithstanding his personal insignificance, emboldens him to set both king and priest at utter defiance :—

“Then answered Amos, and said to Amaziah, I was no prophet, neither was I a prophet's son ; but I was an herdman and a gatherer of sycomore fruit : and the Lord took me as I followed the flock, and the Lord said unto me, Go, prophesy unto my people Israel. *Now therefore hear thou the word of the Lord.*”

And he goes on to repeat the very things he had been forbidden to utter. It is this simplicity of mind and directness of purpose which give the man his rugged grandeur.

The test of Sublimity in material things is the same as that of Beauty. Nature's sublimity is the highest which we can conceive, and sublimity in Art must be founded upon it. The evidence of power, of purpose, of excellence, beyond our ability to grasp and comprehend, is found around us on all sides. The sense of obscurity and mystery in the gloom of a cavern ; the wondrous hues of sunrise changing upon sky and landscape ; the sense of the loneliness of some of Nature's greatest works ; the solemn stillness of the mountain lake, and the stern grandeur of the black precipice which overhangs it,—these things, as well as the roar of the breakers and the might of the storm, make us feel that we are in the presence of forces which we can neither control, nor emulate, nor understand. All the rules and art-systems in the world will never teach an artist to make his works sublime, unless he has felt the sublimity of Nature first. This, too, is an instinct, but it is an instinct which may

be cultivated to a noble appreciation of all that is truly grand and worthy of our highest admiration, or degraded into a mean striving after effect, and a pandering to the silly surprise and wonderment of ignorance and folly.

"Good taste," then, would seem to be that otherwise nameless culture by which we appreciate the higher and better qualities of things. With regard to material objects, it can only be cultivated in one way, viz., by accustoming ourselves to *real* beauty and *true* grandeur. These will be sure to give us a distaste for ugliness, however affected, and for meanness, however pretentious. A man who has been in the habit of drinking good wine will not care greatly for the celebrated British sherry at one shilling and twopence the bottle. The taste of the palate is altogether a physical matter, and is not under our immediate control. We either like a thing or we do not, and it is of no use to argue about it, or to try and persuade ourselves that it is agreeable to us when it is the reverse. But we all know that a man's palate may become so vitiated by a continual use of drugs or condiments that he may be quite unable to taste delicately-flavoured food; and, on the other hand, he may habituate himself to the various refinements of the table until he can perceive the faintest divergence from his standard of excellence. Just in the same way, our likes and dislikes in the matter of material form may be educated, by making ourselves thoroughly familiar with the highest Beauty and Sublimity. And when we can hope to paint the lily or to add a perfume to the violet with any advantage,

then, but not till then, we may set up some standard of material excellence other than the handiwork of Nature.

It is of importance to notice that Beauty or Sublimity ought to rule in all Art. It is indeed necessary that men should sometimes be instructed what to avoid, and, to this end, that evil should be described in all its deformity. For such a purpose, and with due marking of its deadly nature, it may sometimes find a place in Art. But, as a whole, Art exists with a purpose of giving pleasure. It should elevate and ennoble, but it must not fail to please. It has no means of compelling attention; it gains hearers or spectators only by making its subjects inviting to them. Whatever thought it may have to express, however deep or important may be the lessons it has to convey, it will be utterly futile unless it can secure our interest. This it can only do by means of some attractiveness in itself. It may, of course, appeal to the prurient delight which some minds take in horror and deformity; but it is at least useless if it attracts us to mere commonplaces, and it is distinctly evil if it leads us to take pleasure in ugliness or meanness. On the other hand, it must not be forgotten that moral is higher than material, Beauty. Though some subtle beauties of form, or colour, or language should be lost in a work of art, yet a great thought may redeem it all. The grammatical and geographical errors of a Shakspeare are of more value than the learned elaboration of a Johnson, or even than the polished refinement of a Pope. To aim at merely material Beauty produces, as a result, a so-called

classical school. This invariably ends in a departure from Nature altogether. The classical school must have, above all things, prim correctness, and Nature loves especially the grace of freedom and variety. The school of Nature recognises, as we have seen, a moral right and wrong in even material things. It acknowledges, at least, a higher Power than our own, fixing the standard of good taste ; the classical school admits no criterion but its own rules, formed upon its own tastes, which it makes supreme. The school of Nature confesses itself imperfect, and aims ever at improvement, tending towards a perfection which is infinite : the classical school considers itself faultless ; it fixes as its utmost limit that which it has already attained. The classical poet has his rules of rhyme and his rules of metre ; each noun has its proper epithet, each subject its assigned order of development. The heart is not allowed to love or hate but with a regular pulsation, nor the intellect to grasp a truth except in the due course of logical sequence. A classical precedent, moreover, is a sufficient reason for anything. So, too, in Architecture. The creed of the classical school is summed up in the infallibility of the five orders, and should further embellishment be deemed desirable over and above the orthodox volutes and triglyphs, the architect dares not venture upon growing leaves or budding flowers. This would involve imperfection on his part, so he confines himself to urns and the like, and, if he possibly can, copies them from some Greek or Roman model. No "Excelsior" for him. He has reached his petty level of correctness, and means to stay there. Thus he defeats his own

object. He does not even attain to the true material Beauty which he has set up as his goal.

It will now be seen in what manner the exposition of Beauty and Grandeur in Art may be the work of the Imagination. Nature is many-sided, and her most glorious features are often concealed from the common view. Her everyday aspect is so familiar to us that we fail to heed it. The very profusion of her graces causes us to disregard them, and the pressure of care and toil leaves us but little leisure to give to her varied lessons the study which they deserve. The poet, whether his poems are in words, or in marble, or on canvas, has something to tell us about this beauty of the physical universe. He tells us how the facts of the external world affect him, and, if he has a healthily-constituted mind, this will be worth our attention. And not only may he present to us the higher forms of Beauty, and so help to educate our tastes aright, but he may do for us that which Nature herself might fail to effect without his aid. He may unfold to us subtle beauties which Nature has guarded so jealously that he may have been the first to perceive them; and at least he may point out to us excellences which our dulness would otherwise have passed over, or which, existing as single notes in Nature's complex harmonies, we should have deliberately denied, unless he had disentangled them from their surroundings.

Let us not think the pursuit of Beauty a trivial or unimportant thing. We are most of us apt to develop our natures too much on one side. We let anxieties, and hard work, and terrible doubts and

troubles eat away the bloom of our lives, and omit to gather the pure pleasures which even in this world are provided for our use. It is better that a man should be earnest than frivolous, even though his heart sinks within him, and his strength almost fails in face of the sorrowful realities of life. But it is too often forgotten that the faith and hope which are strong enough to raise a man above the tempest to the region of calm, and, in the midst of discord, to make him rejoice in the knowledge that it is but harmony not yet understood—these are better still. The wise man's sadness is, indeed, more to be desired than the fool's mirth, but a wise joy is higher than either. The love of true Beauty is not, nor can it ever be, a following of our own devices. This source of pleasure is provided for us, and offered to us: surely we do wrong if we count it as an ignoble thing or refuse to rejoice in it:—

“Spite of despondence, of the inhuman dearth
Of noble natures, of the gloomy days,
Of all the unhealthy and o'er-darkened ways
Made for our searching: yes, in spite of all,
Some shape of Beauty moves away the pall
From our dark spirits.”



PART II.

THE FUGITIVE ARTS.



PART II.—THE FUGITIVE ARTS.



CHAPTER I.

THE FUGITIVE ARTS.—DANCING.

THERE are certain of the arts which possess a very important common feature distinguishing them from the rest. They are not permanent. The work of the artist is not embodied in any fixed result, his art consists in performance; so that he must come before his audience personally, and whatever effect he may produce passes with the passing hour. When he ceases to perform, his art lives only as a memory. Others may take his place and exert themselves in the same direction, and his example may bear fruit long after his own time, but his personal work as an artist disappears with himself. This is a serious drawback to his influence, which is further circumscribed by the fact that the number of persons who can witness his performance is necessarily limited, and that every time he appears before

a fresh audience, the whole force of his art has to be exerted *de novo*, and is subject to the different accidents of health, humour, and varying encouragement. The arts in question are Dancing, Acting (which includes Pantomime and Elocution), and Executive Music; and it will be seen that, beside their fugitive character, there is another circumstance which marks them as belonging to a somewhat lower rank, viz., that they are for the most part interpretative rather than creative; that is to say, the business of the artist is not to express his own ideas, but those of others. Indeed, the only originality which is permitted to him is in the *manner* of expression. An actor or a musical performer is bound to convey the words or notes which are set down for him. His art lies in doing so in the best way. He ought to bring the full strength of his imagination to bear upon the subject, and the poetical value of the result will depend upon the mental impress which he has stamped upon it; but he cannot travel beyond the bounds of the play, or song, or sonata which he has set himself to perform. Dancing is, indeed, spontaneous, but its limits of expression are so narrow that it affords no greater scope for originality than the others.

For all this, the Fugitive Arts are of very great importance. The personal element in them is a great source of their power. The audience not only see the result, but they see the artist who produces it, and receive it direct from his hands. This gives a human interest to the proceedings which is often wanting in the case of poems or pictures. The book

and the canvas are dead, dumb things ; we know that the poet will speak in and through them if we will listen, but we do not always choose to do so ; and when we do hearken, the voice comes to us with the coldness of a message rather than the warm heartiness of a personal communication. In the case of these other arts, we meet the poet face to face, and are subjected to all the magical influences of bodily presence on the one hand, and direct mental contact on the other.

Further, the transient character of the Fugitive Arts causes them to reflect most accurately the state of the popular taste. A painter or a sculptor who does not exactly hit the mark of public opinion may nevertheless get his works exhibited, and a picture once placed in the Royal Academy, remains there till the end of the season. Even if he does not succeed with the authorities at Burlington House, he may at least effect an entrance into some International Exhibition, or other collection of heterogeneous elements ; or perhaps, if everything else fails, his friends may purchase his production, and present it to some public gallery. So with the architect. If he can only manage to impress his views on a single wealthy patron, he may have an opportunity of realising his ideas ; and his buildings once erected, remain to exert their influence on all who pass them by. The works of a (verbal) poet must be produced before they can be condemned ; and thus they remain a permanent possession, and seldom fail to exercise a certain power for good or evil over the minds of men. But when a drama is unsuccessful,

the manager is compelled to withdraw it immediately, and it may never see the light again. The play may indeed be printed, but the actor's part in it is lost unless it be performed. So, too, a musician cannot continue to supply the public with an entertainment which it resolutely declines to support. This circumstance is one of much danger to the artist. It offers him a great temptation to win applause rather by descending to the level of his audience than by trying to raise them to his own. He is obliged to please his patrons, and it requires more than ordinary courage and perseverance, and no little love of Art for its own sake, for a man to sacrifice any portion of the popularity which he might obtain, in order to achieve a higher artistic excellence. The art passes, and daily bread has to be won. It is, indeed, true that the higher and nobler art will always pay better in the long-run, and ultimately place the artist in a position to which he would never otherwise attain; but in the meantime audiences are cold and ignorant, and have to be educated before they can be pleased; there is much hard and apparently unremunerative work to be gone through before success is achieved, and too many shrink from the task, and fall into the popular clap-trap of their time and place.

We have seen that either Beauty or Sublimity ought to rule in all the arts, and this is notably the case in those under discussion. Their transient character makes it especially necessary for them to give pleasure; they have no chance of producing any effect unless it is produced immediately, and there-

fore it naturally becomes one of their chief functions to expound the beauty or grandeur of the materials with which they have to deal. This will explain many of the characteristics of these arts, and will show how the Imagination may be at work in them. The musician has not only to set forth the facts of the composition before him, but also the beauty of sound, its sweetness and its majesty. The actor may indeed attract by mere comicality, but in his more artistic functions he not only shows the operation of thought and passion on the bodily frame, but also all the grace and dignity possible to human actions. And Dancing, with its low expressive value, has for one of its chief objects the exposition of the beauty of our human frame, considered in its vital aspects, and in the full exercise of health and vigour; the infinite grace of movement of which it is capable, and the intense pleasure which our merely animal perfection may excite within us.

In addition to their display of the Beautiful, the Fugitive Arts have certain functions of expression, which we shall proceed to discuss in detail. With the exception of Dancing, they are, as was said above, founded upon other arts; the actor is indebted to the poet, the musician to the composer. But while their capabilities of originality are thus greatly reduced, their importance is perhaps rather enhanced than otherwise. The composer would effect but little without the aid of his brother artist. He is usually able to perform the functions of the latter himself; but if it were not for an independent order of executants, his influence would extend a

very little way, and his art, too, would be fugitive. Whilst orchestral music demands for its very existence a body of artists who are content to interpret the ideas of another man, and with whom any great originality must be impossible. The poet is not so much indebted to the actor or elocutionist, but this is because he has already the aid of the subordinate kind of music which we call Rhetoric, and which, in some shape or form, he always employs as a medium for expressing the ideas proper to his art. But it cannot be questioned that he gains much by the interpretation of the other artist. The actor transforms his ideas into facts, and gives to the creations of his fancy a real, visible existence.

We may now investigate the art which has been placed lowest of all upon the list, and which, though it has not the disadvantage of depending upon a previous art, is more limited in its range than any other in consequence of the materials with which it has to deal.

The remarks made above as to the want of expressive power in Dancing are somewhat at variance with the opinions usually held on the subject. It is therefore desirable to ascertain clearly what we understand by Dancing, in order that we may be better able to judge of its capabilities. It is frequently defined to be a rhythmical movement of the body, generally regulated by music. This, however, would include marching, as in the case of soldiers, which does not at all represent what we usually understand by Dancing. The translator of M. Noverre's works

(1783) is more exact when he says, "Dancing may be defined a regular motion of the body by leaps and steps beating time to the sound of instruments." Another writer points out that we recognise one particular kind of movement as essential to the art, and asks what constitutes this "dancing step." He remarks that when a man walks across the room he may display both grace and agility, but if he betrays any intention to show these, we accuse him of affectation. In dancing, the performer professes and avows that he shows them. Bearing this in mind, it will perhaps be sufficient definition to say that Dancing is a rhythmical and agile motion of the body for the sake of such grace and such expression as the motion may involve.

Now the general estimate of the expressiveness of Dancing is a rather high one. Adam Smith, in his essay on the Imitative Arts, says that it is much more expressive than Music, and perhaps more so than any other art. He remarks, indeed, that our dances at the present day have little imitation in them, but he seems to think that they were in some cases derived from more expressive types. Thus he tells us that the minuet, in which the woman, after passing and repassing the man several times, gives him first one hand, then the other, then both, was originally a Moorish dance representing emblematically the passion of love. Most writers, however, while admitting that our modern dances can hardly be said to imitate anything, assure us that anciently all dances were imitative and expressive. Amongst the Romans it was considered indecent to dance in private; and

with them, as with most of the nations of antiquity, dancing was used in connection with religious and warlike exercises, as well as in the more serious department of public and social life. The Pyrrhic dance of the Spartans seems to have been a sort of mock-fight, in which the warlike skill and prowess of the performers were largely called into play. As for religious dances, the incidents of Miriam dancing after the overthrow of Pharaoh, and of David dancing before the Ark, will occur to the mind as instances in sacred history. Dancing was also employed in the festivals of Bacchus, Apollo, &c., whilst funereal dances are mentioned in connection with the Romans.* In the reign of Augustus, Pylades and Bathyllus, the inventors of the pantomimic ballet, properly so called, made their appearance, and the accounts given of their performances represent them as possessed of very marvellous powers. In short, without entering into any minute details, there is a concurrence of testimony in favour of the expressiveness of Dancing amongst the ancients. Adam Smith suggests that the reason of this is to be found in the fact that in early times people danced always to vocal music, which being naturally suggestive and expressive, their dances became so too. We now, on the contrary, dance to instrumental music, as a rule, and this having no definite expression, the dances which it directs, and, as it were, inspires, have lost their imitative

* The idea of religious dances has not seemed too absurd for more recent times. They were revived at Toledo by Cardinal Ximenes, and were not unknown in some French churches in the seventeenth century. Funereal and religious as well as warlike dances are said still to exist amongst primitive peoples in various parts of the world.

character. If we admit that Dancing is capable of any great expressiveness, the facts adduced may perhaps account for the low ebb to which we must conclude that it has fallen at the present day. But we shall be better able to judge of the main question at issue by studying the accounts given of the reintroduction of pantomimic Dancing in comparatively modern times.

It appears that it was revived in Italy in the fifteenth century. Female dancers were first introduced in the ballet at an entertainment given at the court of Louis XIV. in 1681, and at length the art was brought to its greatest perfection by the celebrated M. Noverre, who was connected with several of the royal courts of Europe as *maître de ballet* during the latter part of the last century, and who not only produced an immense number of ballets-pantomimes with the greatest success, but has left voluminous writings on the subject. According to him, few occupations would seem to be so important in this world as that of dancing. He makes it appear necessary for a ballet-master, who aspires to anything like eminence in his profession, to possess nearly every accomplishment and virtue possible to man. He mentions Mythology, Ancient Poetry, and Chronology, as forming the primary studies of such a person, and suggests that he ought to possess a genius for Poetry and Painting. In addition to these, he ought to have a slight knowledge of Geometry, so that he may be able to calculate the proportions, &c., of his figures; he should be an expert mechanician, and capable of making small models of any machinery he may require. He ought to be acquainted with Anatomy,

to be able to draw, and to be a proficient in Music. After all this, one is not surprised to find that M. Noverre rates the value of his art rather highly ; he says, indeed, that a ballet should be "a complete pantomime, and, through the eyes, speak, as it were, to the very soul of the spectator." "Explanatory speeches will become useless ; a mute but powerful eloquence will be substituted to much better effect ; each motion will be a sentence, every attitude will betray a situation, each gesture convey a thought, each glance a new sentiment ; and every part will please, because the whole will be a true and faithful imitation of nature." And again : "The mere *figured dances*, without meaning, without the representation of any one subject, unsupported by a regular and sensible intrigue, being no part of the drama, but wondering, if I may say so, how they came there, are in my opinion, as I have declared before, no more than *divertissements* or recreative dances, wherein nothing is observable but the studied exhibition of the mechanical difficulties of our art." It must not be supposed that Noverre was altogether an unpractical enthusiast. His success in carrying out his theories was so great, that on one occasion he was publicly crowned upon the stage. In any case, he does not stand alone in his estimate of Dancing, other writers on the subject having expressed themselves in equally glowing terms.

If, however, we study some of the examples with which the celebrated French ballet-master has supplied us, we shall find that they hardly fulfil the conditions of dancing as laid down above. For

instance, a scene in the ballet of "The Graces" opens thus: "Phillis, sad and thoughtful, observes two turtle-doves perched on the bough of a tree—a beautiful image of love and constancy." Now, even if we were to admit that sadness and thoughtfulness could be expressed by dancing, it would seem difficult to understand how Phillis could explain, by means of a *pas seul*, that she regarded the turtle-doves as a beautiful image of love and constancy. Again, another scene of the same "Anacreontic ballet" is thus described: "The old shepherd and his wife appear, *seated at a table*, on which is spread a frugal rural repast,—expecting the return of their daughters. They express their fears and tender inquietude, they know not how to account for their tedious absence, and begin to feel the disagreeable sensations of uncertainty and apprehension, when at length they see them coming."—(Act i. Scene 3.)

This certainly does not seem at first sight much like a description of a dance, and the same may be said of the opening of the ballet called "The Entertainments or Jealousies of the Seraglio." "The ladies of the seraglio *are seated on rich sofas and cushions*; they are busy in several kinds of work common amongst the Turks. White and black eunuchs superbly dressed appear, and tender to the sultanas sherbet and coffee; others seem eager to present them with flowers, fruits, and perfumes." It may be suggested that if the eunuchs were dancing, in the usual sense of the term, they would make one very nervous about the safety of the sherbet and coffee.

It is, however, in the tragic parts of these ballets

that the difficulties of expression become most striking. Several curious examples are afforded by the "Spanish ballet called the Jealous Man without a Rival." In the first place, "Clitandre quarrels with Beatrix about a pass at chess:" (we may assume that the dancers would possess sufficient skill to avoid upsetting the chessmen.) After this, though Inés (a lady friend) has endeavoured to make up the difference between them, "Beatrix, *naturally haughty*, retires." Take another scene: "The Spaniard from this moment forms very unfavourable notions of the sentiments of Inés towards him; he takes her compassion for affection, her fears for love. Roused by the phantom which jealousy paints to his imagination, he disengages himself from Inés, and attacks Clitandre." It must be admitted, that if Dancing is really capable of expressing all this, it is entitled to take a very high place as an imitative art; but one cannot help thinking that a copious synopsis would be necessary in the programme to enable the spectators to follow the various motives of the performance. M. Noverre, however, disclaims the necessity of any such extraneous aid, and contemptuously likens a ballet which requires verbal explanation to a picture which has so little resemblance to what it is supposed to represent, that the names of the objects have to be written beneath them. Nevertheless, without the advantage of witnessing their actual performance, it is rather hard to realise the intelligibility of some portions of these ballets. In some of them, definite utterances are supposed to be made by the characters; and as these are more or less necessary to the understanding

of the plot, it would appear either that the strictly pantomimic character of the dancing cannot have been maintained, or else that information as to the nature of the transactions on the stage must have been supplied to the audience by some distinct means, as, for instance, through the programme. Thus, in "Love turned Pirate, or a Voyage to Cythere," a stranger escaped from shipwreck "finds himself forced to promise solemnly that he will plunge the dagger with which he is armed into the bosom of the first woman whom too cruel a fate shall convey to that island. Scarce has he begun to utter the dreadful oath, at which he shudders, whilst he makes a secret vow to disobey the new god whose worship he embraces, when the ceremony is interrupted by piercing cries, uttered upon the discovery of a small vessel buffeted by a furious tempest," &c. So, once more, in the tragic ballet of "Agamemnon Revenged," "Electra darts forward to stop her brother's arm, exclaiming, 'Tis my mother!'" This *may* be dancing, but it assuredly does not look much like it. M. Noverre's own translator, in his definition quoted above, speaks of "a regular motion of the body by leaps and steps;" but it can hardly be pretended that a shepherd and his wife seated at a table, or ladies reclining upon sofas, or persons playing chess, can indulge in such agile performances to any considerable extent. It seems perfectly clear that what M. Noverre chose to call "Dancing" was, in reality, nothing more nor less than pantomimic *Acting*. No doubt genuine dances were introduced at every available opportunity; but we have no more right to attribute the imitative value of

a pantomime to the dances which may occur in its midst, than we have to ascribe to them all the powers of vocal music because they are introduced as *divertissements* into an opera. In a good ballet there is as much dancing as possible ; but if any tale is to be told, which in many cases may be desirable, the dancing can hardly go on all the time. It must be varied by bits of genuine acting. Of course, pantomime, performed in the midst of a dead silence, would be a rather dull affair, and accordingly music would usually be played throughout ; and it is probably this circumstance which has caused all the confusion in the matter. It is true that in some cases the acting might be to a certain extent subordinated to the music, and the gestures conformed as far as possible to the rhythm therein supplied ; but even so, it is a question whether the performance ought to be called a dance. For it is clear that just in proportion as the acting becomes more imitative, more true to Nature, so will that essential characteristic, the "dancing step," tend to disappear. In short, as far as the movements of the performer have an extrinsic object, so far must their intrinsic value be disregarded.

The same remark applies to the ancient funereal dances, when, as we are told, the *cortège* was preceded by an individual called Archimimus, or the chief of the mimes, who was dressed in the clothes of the deceased and wore a mask representing his features. Music of a character suited to the occasion was performed during the march, and to these sounds he depicted in the dance the most noteworthy actions of the person whom he represented. All the life of

the defunct was in this manner retraced before the eyes of the public. In this (which strikes one as being a somewhat ghastly performance) there was, no doubt, a good deal of real dancing; but whenever any action of the deceased was represented, it is clear that the dance, properly so called, must have been suspended, or else that the acting must have been carried on, not by means of, but in spite of, the dancing. Of course, if any one chooses to call that Dancing which is otherwise, and more fully, described as pantomimic Acting, it is open to him to do so. The great point is to understand clearly what *is* meant by the term; but as Dancing (in the more restricted sense) has a certain definite value of its own, it seems undesirable to confuse it with another art, which it is frequently connected with, but from which it is in its nature quite distinct.

In Dancing, then, we have to consider "Vital Motion" employed for its own sake, not for a secondary purpose; that is to say, not with a view to reaching a particular object, or performing some definite action, but with the simple design of affecting the spectators by its own grace and its own distinctive characteristics. The function of every art is to show forth the thought, passion, and emotion suggested by its materials. Dancing has to do with life in its active aspects, and the æsthetic value of this activity is best seen when the association of ideas caused by the parade of motives which in practical life call it forth has been removed. A lover embracing his lady, or a warrior fighting against odds and falling overwhelmed by superior numbers, may act grace-

fully enough, but in either case we are primarily affected by the causes of the actions, by the love which moves the one to clasp the maiden to his heart, and the danger which nerves the other's arm and brightens his fast-failing eye. These are the more important matters, and as long as these are fully represented to us, we have little disposition to examine the precise æsthetic qualities of the physical actions which have accompanied them. It is sufficient that they have fulfilled their purpose, and the exquisite adjustment of the actor's bodily frame to its various requirements is naturally overlooked. Accordingly, in Dancing, these disturbing influences are removed, and we have leisure to admire so much of the beauty of movement of the vital mechanism as the artist can interpret to us. The rule that either Beauty or Sublimity must have a place in all good Art finds no exception here, and, from the nature of the case, it is almost exclusively with the former that Dancing has to do. There is little or nothing in vital movement which is likely to transcend our comprehension, nothing that we can feel to be so much above ourselves as to be entitled to be called sublime, but the exclusion of all mean and all unlovely movements necessarily limits the expressiveness of the art. All Art should be founded upon Nature in order to be really beautiful, and therefore an examination of the natural sources of Dancing will show us how far this expressiveness may be legitimately developed.

Modern science has shown that emotion, as well as thought of any kind, is connected with an oxida-

tion of the brain tissue. When an emotion becomes very sudden, intense, and overwhelming, the corroding action proceeds with corresponding rapidity. If too great a strain is thus placed upon the mental organs, it becomes necessary to provide some other outlet for the force which has been so unduly generated. This may sometimes be supplied by awakening thoughts or emotions powerfully in a new direction, so that some other part of the brain may be acted upon. But more commonly the relief of the feelings is sought in physical exertion. Tell a child of a great pleasure in store for it, and it will jump for joy. Its little brain is altogether overcharged by the entrancing tidings, and the surplus vital force flows irresistibly into other channels. In precisely the same way, a man who has received bad news paces up and down the room, or perhaps rushes into the open air and walks a long distance before he is composed. It will be seen that, to produce very active movements, the emotion must be very keen. A quiet grief or a calm pleasure does not generate a sufficient excess of force to give rise to such effects. Again, the emotions which cause physical actions are expressed indeterminately, except upon the broad lines of pleasure and pain (which, however, contain, of course, various degrees and modifications). Now it is obvious that emotions of pain are not naturally associated with ideas of Beauty, and would not ordinarily express themselves by means of beautiful things; and it is also clear that they must be very intense and very grand to express themselves through actions of the body which could in any way

rise to the Sublime : and thus we see that the actions which we call dancing are excited in Nature chiefly by emotions of joy.

This is further indicated by the fact that physical exercise presupposes physical health. A lasting grief weakens this, and a sudden sorrow is generally too little under control to find its expression in actions with which it is not naturally associated. On the other hand, joy and pleasure are not injurious to health, but bound up with it. Health itself produces a kind of joy which we call "animal spirits." Again, the vital forces are more active in youth, so that a child will literally "dance with pain," when a grown man will merely writhe. Consequently, when a comparatively moderate joy is excited in a young and healthy person, there are all the materials for a dance.

There is in all Art a certain pleasure derivable from the sense of difficulty overcome, and this is very obvious in Dancing. "Sword-dances," "egg-dances," and the like, have always been popular. But the reign of Beauty banishes from Dancing, so far as it is a Fine Art, those gymnastic performances which are merely difficult and curious. The gyrations and eccentricities of the *can-can* have, of course, no æsthetic value. The real delight of Dancing lies in its grace. It is not when the *première danseuse* stands inconveniently on one leg, but when the *coryphées* flit lightly hither and thither across the stage, completely ignoring any suspicion of hard work, that such healthy influence as a modern ballet can exert makes itself felt. To sum up our conclusions : The functions of

Dancing are to show forth the poetry of Vital Motion, and thus to express beauty and joy, and in some degree very intense and sudden distress and anger also. The latter may be expressed whenever the passion may be considered to be sufficiently under control to admit of the subject of it thinking of its effect on others. It is said that the dance of the Eumenides or Furies, anciently performed at Athens, was so fearful as to terrify all spectators. Strong men and tender women alike trembled at the sight, and many could not bear it, but rushed from the place. If these accounts are to be believed, the dancing must have been rather grand than beautiful. We read, again, that the priests of Baal on Mount Carmel "leaped upon the altar which was made." It is not stated that this was a dance, but it is cited here as an instance of intense and passionate anxiety, which we could readily conceive as being so expressed. The priests were violently excited; they "cut themselves after their manner with knives and lancets till the blood gushed out upon them." Moreover, they cried incessantly, "O Baal, hear us!" and from what we know of similar worship amongst primitive tribes, it would seem most likely that this was chanted in some wild rhythmical chorus. And, excited as they were, they had a sufficiently definite object in view, and were sufficiently regardful of the onlooking multitude, to reduce their frantic gestures to something like an orderly rhythm too. This is only a suggestion, but the possibility of such a dance is offered as one reason for not confining the expressiveness of the art to joy alone. But the conveyance of

ideas of sorrow, or pain, or fury, is only an exceptional function of Dancing. Its principal and most natural use is connected with the opposite emotions. The expression of joy in ordinary dancing is too obvious to need comment, and it will be readily seen that it is the most usual motive of less familiar examples. The religious dances, for instance, whether of Bacchantes, or mediæval Christians, or Dancing Dervishes, are usually the offspring of some form of joy or ecstasy. "Praise Him with the timbrel and dance," says the Psalmist in his most exulting song. And when the art has sunk to its lowest depths—and it can sink very low—we see still some wild unhealthy joy lying at the root of it. Perhaps the most frightful dance which the world has yet seen was the *carmagnole* of the French Revolution; but horrible as it must have been, it was still the expression of joy. We will let Charles Dickens describe it to us:—

"There could not be fewer than five hundred people, and they were dancing like five thousand demons. There was no other music than their own singing. They danced to the popular Revolution-song, keeping a ferocious time that was like a gnashing of teeth in unison. Men and women danced together, women danced together, men danced together, as hazard had brought them together. At first they were a mere storm of coarse red caps and coarse woollen rags; but as they filled the place and stopped to dance about Lucie, some ghastly apparition of a dance-figure gone raving mad arose among them. They advanced, retreated, struck at one another's hands, clutched at one another's heads, spun round alone,

caught one another and spun round in pairs, until many of them dropped. While those were down, the rest linked hand in hand, and all spun round together. Then the ring broke, and in separate rings of two and four they turned and turned until they all stopped at once, began again, struck, clutched, and tore, and then reversed the spin, and all spun round another way. Suddenly they stopped again, paused, struck out the time afresh, formed into lines the width of the public way, and with their heads low down and their hands high up, swooped screaming off. No fight could have been half so terrible as this dance. It was so emphatically a fallen sport—a something once innocent delivered over to all devilry, a healthy pastime changed into a means of angering the blood, bewildering the senses, and steeling the heart. Such grace as was visible in it made it the uglier, showing how warped and perverted all things good by nature were become. The maidenly bosom bared to this; the pretty, almost child's head thus distracted; the delicate foot mincing in this slough of blood and dirt, were types of the disjointed time. This was the *car-magnole*. As it passed, leaving Lucie frightened and bewildered in the doorway of the wood-sawyer's house, the feathery snow fell as quietly, and lay as white and soft, as if it had never been."—*Tale of Two Cities*, book iii. ch. v.

The novelist's instinct was right in calling this a fallen *sport*. It told of the fierce exultation of wild beasts broken from their cages, the terrible mirth of evil spirits celebrating their complete mastery of the human breasts in which they had so long lain hidden.

It is sometimes said that Dancing may tell of love. It is probably more correct to say that it may tell of voluptuousness. The higher and nobler forms of love are not meant by those who speak thus. All travellers concur in stating that the dancing-girls of the East are simply immodest in their gestures. Unfortunately, just as Dancing may express an evil joy, so, connected as it is with physical perfection, with health and high spirits, it only too readily lends itself to a degraded sensuality. The idea which Moore endeavours to give of Eastern dances serves to show the real character of all such supposed expressions of love:—

“ And now the curtains fly apart, and in
 From the cool air, 'mid showers of jessamine,
 Which those without fling after them in play,
 Two lightsome maidens spring, lightsome as they
 Who live in th' air on odours, and around
 The bright saloon, scarce conscious of the ground,
 Chase one another in a varying dance
 Of mirth and languor, coyness and advance,
 Too eloquently like love's warm pursuit.

• • • • •
 Around the white necks of the nymphs who danced
 Hung carcanets of orient gems, that glanced
 More brilliant than the sea-glass glittering o'er
 The hills of crystal on the Caspian shore;
 While from their long dark tresses, in a fall
 Of curls descending, bells, as musical
 As those that on the golden-shafted trees
 Of Eden shake in the eternal breeze,
 Rung round their steps, at every bound more sweet,
 As 'twere th' ecstatic language of their feet.
 At length the chase was o'er, and they stood wreathed
 Within each other's arms.”

Lalla Rookh, "The Veiled Prophet of Khorassan."

The effect here is not due to the dancing, but to the

white necks, dark tresses, and so forth, which it has served to display.

The present condition of Dancing, considered as a poetical art, is certainly anything but encouraging. The ease with which it may be degraded has been only too fully turned to account, and one cannot wonder that many persons discountenance it altogether. Here and there a dancer may be found who really tries to evoke something like grace and beauty from the art, but any intelligent pursuit of its higher developments is conspicuous by its absence. The vast majority of modern dancers are mere posture-makers, or else vigorous gymnasts kicking up their heels in defiance of all laws of beauty or modesty. The ballets consist principally of the grouping of differently-coloured dresses—in itself not a bad thing, if the dancing connected with it were worth seeing; but the *première danseuse* is usually a person distinguished by the extreme paucity of her clothing, who places herself in a variety of unnatural attitudes, and displays movements and gestures which in their merely artistic aspect are ugly, and from a moral point of view something worse. The decline of the art has been aided by the wholesale introduction of what may be called the monkey-and-lobster element, in which persons clad in a ridiculous parody of the skins and shells of apes, alligators, oysters, and the like, go through a series of frantic gyrations which are supposed to do duty for dancing. Upon this our theatres now largely rely, together with a gorgeous display of scenic glitter, and as lavish a presentment of the human form as the management thinks it may

venture on, in view of the feeble supervision of the Lord Chamberlain. In the midst of such a state of things it is hard to realise how much poetry might characterise the art of Dancing. We must remember, however, that most things in the world are liable to corruption, and the fact that Dancing has been applied to ignoble uses is no argument against its capability for better things. Nothing that is really beautiful ought ever to be despised by us, and that the human mechanism is exquisitely beautiful no one will deny. Not only is the human form, the crown of God's creation, comely, but the movements with which it is endowed are capable of exhibiting the very perfection of grace. We think it well to take pleasure in the bending of the harebell, the waving of the corn-field, the dance of the forest leaves: we fail not to delight in the bound of the fawn, the flit of the swallow, the majestic sail of the seagull. Surely it would not be wise to ignore in the movements of our own marvellous human frame a source of greater æsthetic pleasure still. A dancer who is worthy to be called an artist will find out all kinds of subtle graces and delicacies of movement, and set them before us with simplicity and refinement. There is in such movement a beauty which should be connected with none but pure and wholesome thoughts—a beauty given us to be enjoyed, which, if we use it rightly, will lighten our hearts and recreate our minds, and so make us fitter to deal with the more serious duties and difficulties of life.

The following extract from a magazine of forty years ago, though characterised by the "tall writing"

common at the period, will serve to show what emotions the art is capable of inspiring at its best :—

"Taglioni ! she seemed to float an iris in the filmy light, a dove's wing might bear her up. I perceived nothing to detract from her enchanting appearance as she glided along with her limbs wandering at their 'own sweet will,' and the eye acknowledged with rapture that 'her body thought.' Jeremy Taylor pronounced an anathema against dancing. Had he ever seen Taglioni he would have taken a *stall*. In her his eyes would not have been offended by the 'indecent mixtures of wanton dancing.' Her gestures cannot be called prologues to voluptuousness. They address themselves of a truth to the senses, but they also wake up thoughts of beauty which sleep like odours within the spirit. The eloquent author of the 'Holy Living' might have applied to Taglioni his own quaint yet exquisite image of light dancing in the eyes like boys at a festival. Good-night to Taglioni ! I am sick and ill, and a poor student, and my eyes are dim with thought and study. What have I to do with thee, sweetest of Italy's daughters ? Most likely I shall never see thee any more. Yet sometimes, it may be, in my silent and lonely room, my heart will travel back to the days that are gone, and the gentle light of one who walketh in her own brightness may break upon the gloom, and I may behold thee yet once again, springing out like a phantom of the spirit from the darkness of memory. Good-night to Taglioni !"

One thing more remains to be noticed. Dancing is by far the most natural of all the arts. The poetry

of it, its mental and emotional part, comes out without premeditation, so that a child will often dance gracefully without instruction, finding thus the best medium for conveying its own bright ideas. As an art, it is only the expression of certain natural instincts, and it is in that view that it should be cultivated. It has been spoken of chiefly with reference to its public performance, but it is of no small value as an innocent and healthy social recreation. It would be well if real dancing (not mere quadrilles, but the genuine thing, displaying some grace and skill) were more commonly practised as an amusement by all classes. Recreation always will and must be had in some shape or form. This has the advantage of being simple and beautiful, and at the same time greatly conducive to health, while if it were more common it would be much less liable to abuse.

We may be allowed to conclude with the words of Steele in the "Spectator:"—

"It may, perhaps, appear odd that I, who set up for a mighty lover at least of virtue, should take so much pains to recommend what the soberer part of mankind look upon to be a trifle; but, under favour of the soberer part of mankind, I think they have not enough considered this matter, and for that reason only disesteem it."

CHAPTER II.

PANTOMIME.

IF we take the writings of M. Noverre to refer to Pantomimic Acting, rather than to Dancing, we shall find them more worthy of consideration.

It is obvious that Pantomime is entitled to take rank as an imitative art, and the question how far it is expressive involves very different considerations from those applicable to Dancing. "Acting," taking that term in its full and most usual sense, consists of two parts—action and elocution. Each of these may exist separately, but both are necessary to the perfection of dramatic representation. Pantomime is therefore an imperfect form of Acting. The latter, like nearly all the Fugitive Arts, is essentially interpretative. Its function is to expound the story suggested by the dramatist, with all the thoughts and ideas which it may contain. This story is, of course, usually told in the *words* which the actor utters, and the question before us is therefore, how far it can be conveyed when the usual medium of its expression is withdrawn? In short, in a complete drama the action is suited to the word, and the audience have no difficulty in perceiving its motive. We purpose to inquire how

it will succeed when it is dependent upon itself alike for plot, intellectual reasoning, and moral sentiment.

A pantomimist is clearly able to relate *actions* without difficulty. In fact, he does not interpret these, but actually performs them. A man pursuing, or fighting, or stabbing another on the stage, may, of course, be exactly like a man pursuing, or fighting, or stabbing another in real life. The actions themselves are presented, not represented. In this manner a certain class of stories can be rendered in pantomime without fear of being misunderstood. In addition to this, there are many actions which have a well-known conventional value. Thus, if a man shakes his fist at another in real life, we understand that he is threatening him, and the action would convey the same impression on the stage. In the same way, if a young couple rush into each other's arms, and embrace cordially, we assume them to be lovers. As long, therefore, as the actor has merely to depict actions, or such simple ideas as are universally associated with certain definite actions, Pantomime supplies an adequate means of expression. It is easy to imagine a story which could be readily told in this way. A party of travellers attacked by robbers; a gallant defence of wives and children by the former; one of the travellers made prisoner and carried off to a mountain fastness; his escape, through the connivance of one of the robbers, and another desperate encounter with the bandit-chief. All this, and much more in the same style, could be easily represented, and as easily understood, without any verbal explanation. But the performance would consist entirely of

"graphic" actions, which would be found sufficiently suggestive if witnessed in real life, say in Spain, where such a scene might be observed from a distance, or by a person ignorant of the language of the parties, and where, nevertheless, no one would fail to comprehend fully the nature of the proceedings.

But further; even if the actions themselves are not essentially expressive, they may relate to a subject already known to the spectators, and therefore easily recognised by them. This was probably the case with those ancient pantomimes, about which so much has been said and written. The subject represented was usually some familiar myth or legend, the story of which every one present knew perfectly beforehand. The particular myth selected for illustration would, of course, be stated, and every link in the chain of events would then be anticipated as a matter of course. Suppose the adventures of Robinson Crusoe to be represented in pantomime upon the modern stage. Each one of the audience would know what he was going to see, and however atrociously it might be acted, the story would be comprehended throughout. The finding of the footsteps on the sand, the appearance of Friday, and so forth, could not fail to be recognised. But in such a case, the pantomime would not be entitled to the credit of having told the story. The whole narrative would be present in the minds of the spectators in the first instance, and the acting would merely serve to interpret it. Most of the pantomimes to which great expressive power has been attributed will be found to belong to this class.

On the other hand, many stories might be constructed, of which the motives would be so obvious that, although not known beforehand, they could hardly fail to be understood, even when concerned with something more than the mere graphic actions referred to above. Thus, if we were to see represented in pantomime a damsel in the company of a young man, and shortly afterwards were to find that she avoided him, and sought the society of another, and were subsequently to perceive signs of a quarrel or a contest between the two men, we should not be long in surmising jealousy, that being the most usual concomitant of such a state of things. But allowing for the sufficiency of Pantomime in all such cases, we have still to inquire whether it will serve to express more recondite thoughts and more refined shades of emotion. There are, of course, certain forms of facial expression and gesture which naturally correspond with certain emotions. A man looks very different when he is pleased and when he is disgusted. In the same way there are particular expressions of the features suitable to pride, to indolence, to dejection, to terror, to scorn, and so forth. But although the broad differences between the emotions are in some cases not difficult to express facially, it will be found far from easy to convey the subtle distinctions which separate kindred feelings. A story is somewhere told of an actor who undertook to represent a variety of different emotions by face and gesture alone, and desired a friend to see if he could recognise them. The result was not satisfactory, for the friend interpreted

as *conceit* that which was meant for *dignity*; and on the actor assuming another expression, suggested, with some hesitation, that he must be representing *imbecility*. "Fool!" cried the actor, "that was *love*."

The reason of such failure is partly due to the fact that the same movements of the muscles produce different results in the case of different features. Amusement gives rise to a pleasant smile on one face and a disagreeable grin on another. Besides which, although each shade of emotion may have its own proper shade of expression, which may be ascertained by sufficient study, these varieties are not, as a matter of fact, recognised by the bulk of mankind. A curious book on "Gesture and Action," by Henry Siddons, published in 1822 (founded on one by M. Engel), contains a great many minute observations on this point. The author quotes the following description of the outward effects of love: "The head drops a little on one side; the eyelids are drawn down more close than usual; the eye, directed towards the object, moves with softness; the mouth is half opened; the respiration is slow," &c. Now, without denying that all this may be true, it may be asserted, without risk of dispute, that not one man in ten thousand has ever noticed such details of expression, or, if he saw them, would detect them and refer them to their proper source. Further, if we could distinguish some of the passions, we should generally be at a loss to conjecture the train of thought which had produced them, and this would at once be fatal to the narration of any elaborate story. In short, as soon as we follow

the subject into details, we perceive that Pantomime can only go a very little way. Siddons, the writer just referred to, insists strongly upon this, and points out that for a pantomime to be at all adequate to the expression of human feelings, it would be necessary for a regular language of gesture to be constructed. This is not impossible, for it has been actually done by the deaf and dumb, and it may be of interest in the present inquiry to glance at the practical working of their system.

The common manual alphabet is, of course, connected with ordinary verbal language. Each sign stands for a letter, and thus any word can be spelled on the fingers as easily as it can be written upon paper. But the use of this alphabet presupposes the knowledge of the verbal language, and this can only be taught to a deaf person at some cost of time, trouble, and experience. Accordingly children thus afflicted, who are in poor circumstances, are often allowed to grow up without any proper instruction, and are ignorant of any language except one of gesture which they pick up amongst their fellows. In this latter system each sign stands for a word, and as it involves no previous knowledge, it is readily learnt. Indeed, multitudes of the poor deaf and dumb are entirely dependent upon it for making known their wants, and for general intercourse with their fellows. At S. Saviour's Church for the deaf and dumb in Oxford Street, the service is not only rendered in the finger-alphabet, but, for the sake of the more ignorant part of the congregation, it is also translated into the sign-language—every sentence

being thus given twice. Most of the signs have had their origin in some association of ideas, but, to an ordinary spectator, some at least appear quite arbitrary. For example, to close the fists, and, putting one upon the other, move both hands downwards, signifies "a church." Few persons would guess that this was suggested by the action of *ringing the bell*. To place the tips of the fingers together, and slope the hands outwards, signifies "a house." This refers to the form of a gabled roof. To touch the collar, and hold up two fingers, means "two shillings;" the collar implying "silver," because both are white. So to touch the lip (which is red) means "gold." A deaf and dumb person, even when uneducated, readily perceives the intention of *natural* signs; as, for example, when the hands are placed alternately one above the other to signify "build" or "building;" or when one hand is moved forwards with a sort of wavy motion to signify "a fish." But the greater part of even these are quite unintelligible to any one who has not been accustomed all his life to watch and interpret the most trivial gestures, and who has not had his perceptions sharpened by being dependent on such interpretation for all communication with his fellow-men. To take a few more instances: To stroke the beard (or, in its absence, the place it generally occupies) means "a man;" to rub the cheek gently with the forefinger, "a woman." To rub the knuckles of the closed fists together implies "a brother" or "brothers;" to make the hands describe a circle in the air, the "earth" or "world." But, in addition to the so-called "natural signs," there are

others which are purely arbitrary. Thus holding up the thumb means "good" in all its applications, whilst holding up the little finger gives the reverse. "How do you do?" may be asked in the sign-language by rubbing the chest, and holding up the thumb with an expression of inquiry—which would be literally, "Is your health good?" Suppose it is wished to give the answer, "No, I have a headache," it will suffice to shake the head, touch the forehead, and hold up the little finger. Some of these signs have a rational origin, but come to be used arbitrarily afterwards, when the reason for their adoption is forgotten. The late principal of a large institution for the deaf and dumb in Scotland was in the habit of wearing a somewhat noticeable tartan waistcoat. Accordingly, his pupils indicated him by passing the hand up and across the chest, as if tracing a checked pattern. This has become his "sign" or name, and those of the present pupils who did not know him personally, use the same sign, though its origin may be quite unknown to them. The present principal is indicated by placing the hand at the side of the head, where the gentleman in question has a large bushy curl of hair. Any peculiarity which strikes the mute observers at first sight becomes permanently associated with the object in connection with which it was noticed. A certain missionary to the deaf and dumb had a very graphic way of indicating "amazement," which idea chanced to occur several times in the chapter of the Bible which he read to them at his first service. Accordingly, he was always afterwards known in that part of the world by

drawing both hands backwards, as in astonishment, but without any special facial expression. Another gentleman, in the course of a speech made on first coming amongst the deaf mutes, wanted to speak of going somewhere with a friend. He did not recollect the usual sign for "going," so he trotted two fingers of each hand along for a few inches. This amused the spectators, and his "sign" has ever since been moving the hands forwards. If such a sign occurs in the course of conversation with a stranger, the latter will stop the speaker, and make a gesture of inquiry. If the other desires merely to explain that the sign is a *name*, he will touch his forehead with the first and second fingers—if that it is the name of a *man*, he will also pull his beard. If he desires to say, "It is the name of the man who taught me," he will touch his forehead, pull his beard, move his forefingers forwards from the corners of his mouth, and, lastly, point to himself. These examples show the natural development of a "language of gesture," and this is clearly not what we generally understand by the art of Pantomime at all, but is a language which must be learnt like any other. It is evident that no system of the kind could ever be made available as a means of conveying the details of a story, or the feelings and thoughts of a character, to the understanding of a general audience. As for the expressiveness of ordinary gestures, apart from any conventional value attributed to them, we have seen that they are much too limited in range to serve to explain the complicated play of emotions which a story of any real interest necessarily involves.

Dickens has given us an admirable caricature of Pantomime. When Nicholas Nickleby first makes acquaintance with Mr Vincent Crummles' theatre, a rehearsal is proceeding of a "Ballet Interlude" entitled "The Indian Savage and the Maiden." The details of this performance will no doubt be remembered. A dance on the part of the maiden "seemed to make some impression upon the savage; for after a little more ferocity, and chasing of the maiden into corners, he began to relent, and stroked his face several times with his right thumb and four fingers, thereby indicating that he was struck with admiration of the maiden's beauty. Acting upon the impulse of this passion, he (the savage) began to hit himself severe thumps in the chest, and to exhibit other indications of being desperately in love, which being rather a prosy proceeding, was very likely the cause of the maiden's falling asleep." Subsequently, the savage "plucked from a neighbouring tree some botanical curiosity resembling a small pickled cabbage, and offered it to the maiden, who at first wouldn't have it, but, on the savage shedding tears, relented. Then the savage jumped for joy; then the maiden jumped for rapture at the sweet smell of the pickled cabbage. Then the savage and the maiden danced violently together, and finally the savage dropped down on one knee, and the maiden stood on one leg upon his other knee; thus concluding the ballet, and leaving the spectators in a state of pleasing uncertainty whether she would ultimately marry the savage or return to her friends."

Making allowance for the licence of the humorist,

this is really a fair account of the ordinary effects of pure Pantomime, especially in the uncertainty left upon the minds of the audience as to the *dénouement*.

Upon the whole, we may conclude that only very broad and obvious ideas can be expressed by this branch of Art. Noverre himself, though he insists so strongly upon the sufficiency of Pantomime to explain the details of a story, yet requires that the outline of the plot should be previously known to the spectators. This is the whole point at issue; for if we admit that the subject must either be explained in the programme, or in some way suggested to the audience beforehand, we must conclude that Pantomime is not a creative, but an interpretative art. It can, in fact, interpret, in a broad and general way, a story existing in the minds of the spectators (whether suggested by its own more obvious and *graphic* actions, or by previous knowledge), just in the same way as when united with Elocution it can interpret ideas and feelings which are explained verbally as the action proceeds. It is nothing but one of the component parts of the fuller dramatic representation; and, when divorced from its complementary art, does not really stand alone, but makes what use it can of less perfect substitutes. Action, be it observed, is the most important mechanical part of the Drama, just as the use of language is the leading characteristic of the verbal poet. That is to say, action in the one case, language in the other, is the medium wherewith the artist works: but the greatness of the result depends upon how that

medium is employed, and what it serves to express. Pantomime may interpret Tragedy, provided the tragedy is known to the spectators; but when it relies upon its own resources, it stands in similar relation to the Drama that *vers de société* occupy with regard to the nobler works of Poetry. In a brief, ephemeral, unpretending poem, it may suffice if some simple and not very recondite thought is expressed, provided that the metre is exquisitely tuneful, the rhyme faultless, and the language choice and refined. The chief pleasure is to be sought in the versification. But in a poem which aims at higher things, though the rhythm is still employed as a medium of expression, the thing expressed is very different. And while the first business of an actor is to act, as that of a poet is to use his language fluently, dramas, like poems, take rank according to the character of their subjects.

The art of Pantomime is at the present day almost entirely neglected. The Christmas entertainment which goes by the name is not, strictly speaking, Pantomime at all, but merely an elaborate farce, accompanied by great scenic display, and terminating in a conventional and grotesque manner. The great success of Pantomime in former times can only be explained by the supposition that the popular enthusiasm for everything connected with the stage was much greater than at the present day, or else that actors were much more competent than they now are. However this may be, it would be an interesting experiment if some of our best dramatic artists would revive this ancient form of imitative

Art, and try how far their powers would extend when deprived of the verbal explanation of details, and assisted in their representations by nothing more than the outline of a simple plot previously known to the spectators.



CHAPTER III.

ACTING.

IT was shown in the chapter on Dancing, that that art is the proper medium for the expression of the graces of human action *per se*; and it will be seen that in the higher arts of Pantomime and full dramatic representation, this "poetry of Vital Motion" is not lost, but is used only as a means to an end. The beauty and nobleness of human actions must still be set forth by the artist, but no longer for their own sake. Actions are dramatic only so far as they serve to elucidate and enforce the thoughts and emotions with which they are connected. It has been shown that Pantomime is an imperfect form of this kind of interpretative Art, and we now come to consider the interpretation itself.

The function of the Drama is to display the social and moral ideas of the poet or historian in their actual working. Theories of life are of no use unless they can be carried into practice. The profoundest philosophy will fail to influence us, unless we can perceive its practical bearing upon ourselves. Accordingly, the novelist, the dramatist, and the actor come forward to help our dull perceptions in this matter.

The two former create a set of men and women who exemplify in their lives the various characteristics of which it is desired to treat; whilst the actor goes further still, and brings these men and women before us visibly, in order that we may study them and their deeds, with all their good and evil qualities; and may thus learn to sympathise with sorrows whose nature we should not otherwise understand, and be made sharers in joys which we should otherwise fail to realise. In short, the poet suggests to us certain modes of thought and feeling; the dramatist suggests their practical result; and the actor produces that result before our eyes. The Drama appeals, as Sir Walter Scott says, to "that strong, instinctive, and sympathetic curiosity, which tempts men to look into the bosoms of their fellow-creatures, and to seek in the distresses or emotions of others the parallel of their own passions." It attracts strongly, because in it the spectators see a reflection of themselves, with the same difficulties, troubles, victories, pleasures, that they from time to time experience, no longer choked in utterance by the necessities of social existence, but fully set forth for sympathy and admiration. They are freed from the compulsory hypocrisy of society, and both witness the vices they detest held up to execration, and can laugh openly at the foibles and follies they despise. If they care to be instructed as well as amused, they may study what author and actor have to say about the great problems of life; what counsel they have to offer, what hope to impart: they may learn what others think of faults and failings for which they themselves

plead excuses ; and how modes of conduct in which they indulge appear, when looked at from the bystander's point of view. The Drama aims, as far as possible, at substituting realities for descriptions ; it gives us real men and women, real conversations, gestures, facial expression, and the like, in place of merely talking about them ; and so brings the subjects of which it treats more clearly home to our minds than would be possible by any other means.

This object of dramatic representation—viz., to bring the events of history or of fiction visibly before us—will explain the origin of the early forms of the art. The Drama in Greece was intimately connected with religious worship, and was generally employed as a means of instructing the audience in the history of their deities, or the marvellous exploits of the demigods who occupied so important a position in their mythology. The helpless, hopeless submission to a blind fate, which was inculcated by the Grecian creed, found its fullest exemplification in their tragedies ; and the human passions and ultimate destiny which they ascribed to their gods permitted those deities themselves to be represented on the stage without producing the effect of irreverence. In the same way, in the middle ages, when books were not available to teach the great truths of religion to the bulk of the people, the monks and priests bethought them of supplementing their sermons by the more vivid influences of dramatic representation. In no way could they so effectually teach the facts of the world's history, and unfold the story of our Lord's life and death, as by depicting them upon the

stage. Hence arose those "Miracle - plays" and "Mysteries," which, however foreign they may appear to some modern tastes, had doubtless an important influence over the untutored minds of those to whom they were at first submitted. Undoubtedly there was much in these plays which we should now consider grossly irreverent. Relief from the gloomy seriousness of the representation was provided by the tricks and capers of the Devil, who seems to have performed the functions of a Merry-andrew; and who is probably to be traced through the "Vice" of the "Moralities" to Mr Punch, the immoral hero of the modern street puppet-show. But great allowances must be made for the rude, uncultivated character of the audiences to which these plays were represented; and such performances, with all their faults, probably offered the only available means of impressing the histories of the Bible, or the events of the lives of saints, upon the minds of the people. Considerable attention has been called of late to one of these religious plays, which has survived till the present time in the village of Ober-Ammergau in the Tyrol. The spectacle is exhibited at intervals of ten years, and is regarded quite as an act of devotion on the part of the performers. Each one has to undergo a long religious probation before being finally intrusted with his part. All accounts agree in describing the effect of the performance as extremely solemn, and as being entirely free from the painful appearance of parody, which one would naturally expect to be the result of a dramatic treatment of sacred subjects.*

* An excellent description of the performance which took place in

In the "Moralities," which succeeded the "Mysteries," the power of the Drama was still enlisted for didactic purposes, but Allegory took the place of History, and the various virtues and vices were personified. Still the object of convincing by actual representation was retained, and amidst great imperfections, and even gross absurdities, the moral object of the performance was no doubt secured. The modern Drama has the same end in view, but its means are ampler, and its methods more consonant with the natural exhibition of the various qualities of heart and mind with which it is concerned.

But whilst the Drama may thus be regarded as a means of instruction, it must not be forgotten that its influence and attractiveness rise from no such exalted source. It is connected, in the first instance, with a certain *instinct of imitation*, which is closely bound up with our human nature. Children, left to themselves, will begin to play at visiting, or keeping a shop, or something of the kind; and the motive which leads them to act thus remains with them through life. A passage in Forster's "Life of Dickens" records the latter's intense delight in "assumption:" "Assumption has charms for me so delightful—I hardly know for how many wild reasons—that I feel a loss of—oh, I can't say what exquisite foolery, when I lose a chance of being some one not in the remotest degree like myself!" Probably most people have felt the same thing at times, in a greater or less degree; and the fascination attaches to witnessing the impersona-

1850 is given in Miss A. M. Howitt's "Art Student in Munich," and is quoted at length in the notes to Longfellow's "Golden Legend."

tions of others, as well as assuming a character one's self.

Here, however, a most important consideration meets us. If the assumption be *too real*, the pleasure of it, both for actor and spectator, is at once destroyed. There must always be a certain glamour of fictitiousness apparent in the representation, if only to assure those concerned that it *is* imitation. It is only so that the charm of exercising the fancy can exist. A child is always happier, if the house in which she is supposed to visit her playmate consists of four chairs, or if the shop-counter is represented by an old stool, and the wares for sale are, in sober truth, nothing more than a few empty cotton-reels. The pleasure lies in "making believe;" and there is not half so much enjoyment in all the elaborate mechanical treasures of Mr Cremer's or Mr Izzard's shop, as in the home-made toys which children of simple habits are content with. The fact is, that the toy is nothing but a point round which the child's active fancies may crystallise. She knows perfectly well that the rag-doll is not a baby, and probably is quite aware of its excessive ugliness—only she does not concern herself about that. She wants something to fondle and chatter to—something with whose help *she may imitate her mother and her nurse.*

If we trace out this tendency to imitation, as the child grows older, we shall find the same element of conscious unreality necessary to its enjoyment. The shopkeeping in the nursery is replaced by the acting charade, and that by the more elaborate farce in the back drawing-room; and nothing is too much to

expect both actors and audience to take for granted in such performances. We all yield ourselves readily to the illusions suggested by our friends, and fill up from our own mental resources the wide interval between their Art and the facts of Nature. It is clear, then, from every one's experience, that it is not at all necessary for such fiction to be absolutely like fact in order to be enjoyed. On the contrary, a brief consideration will prove to us that exact outward resemblance to realities is often positively displeasing. We enjoy Tragedy when everything around us tells us it is mere pretence ; but the tragedy of real life awakens very different feelings. And on the other hand, the hansom cab, when it is brought upon the stage, being precisely like any other hansom cab, and moreover a very commonplace sort of thing, arouses no interest whatever, except perhaps a languid wonder as to where they put it in the wings. And the more we look into the matter, the more clearly we shall see that what is really capable of interesting a healthy mind in fictitious representations is not the outward form, but the thought and feeling which the Drama serves to clothe. Just as the child tries to fancy herself a shopkeeper, or a nurse, or a fine lady, so the more cultivated man or woman takes pleasure in searching in his or her own breast for the various emotions which lie there ready to be called forth by suitable circumstances, and enjoys the sentiment, when it is unconnected with the difficulties, troubles, disappointments, and sorrows associated with the realities of life.

It is, then, the mental part of the character in which realism is to be chiefly aimed at in Acting. This

should be followed out into its smallest details, and the mimicry of form and manner cultivated only so far as it will serve to elucidate the more important things. But, even so, it must be borne in mind that absolute realism would be a mistake; for the actor does not act for himself, but for his audience, and the circumstances of dramatic representation are such that the transactions of real life would seem tame and colourless on the stage. Indeed, there is very little of the heroic in practical affairs. It has been remarked that, upon the stage, war is usually declared by a number of gorgeous warriors laying their hands upon their swords, and pouring forth more or less of fervent oratory; whereas, in fact, it is usually the result of a few elderly gentlemen, seated round a table, discussing a series of excessively prosy documents after an excessively prosy fashion. And experience tells us that, as a rule, the joys and griefs of private life are exemplified in actions which are, to say the least, undignified. As for that important feature of society, love-making, we have only to read the reports of the Breach of Promise cases in the newspapers, to be convinced of the extreme intellectual feebleness and practical absurdity which usually characterise this sort of proceeding. It is necessary that all this should be refined and elevated for representation on the stage; otherwise it would be merely ridiculous. We show but little of our real feelings in our daily life, and the business of the dramatist and actor is to deal with those subtler forms of thought and emotion which usually lie hidden beneath a crust of needful conventionalities. The object to be aimed at

is to *produce the effect of Nature*, but not of such Nature as the audience see around them every day. It must, indeed, be true, but true to the higher and subtler passions and motives of men.

It is curious to remark that the notion of exact realism seems to have been quite foreign to the genius of the ancient Drama. The face disguised by a mask, and the figure artificially heightened by the buskin, must have been utterly destructive of all such illusion. Indeed, many of the characteristics of the ancient Drama, notably that curious institution, the Chorus, show that the spectators were willing in those days to subordinate the mere accidents of outward form and outward circumstance to the more important verities of character and feeling. It was enough for them if the intention of the dramatist in the other respects was indicated, and they were ready at once to fill up for themselves the outlines so provided. Far otherwise is it with ourselves. This nineteenth century has witnessed the development of a species of representation which has been appropriately characterised as "the upholstery, or dry-goods Drama," in which scenery, costume, and the like have altogether usurped the place which ought to be occupied by the delineation of human character. How far this may be carried is shown by an advertisement of a Christmas Pantomime, produced within the last year or two at one of the minor theatres of London. This document says: "There is really no describing the magnitude of this glorious display of unparalleled grandeur, all the resources of the proprietors having been brought into requisition." After this a list is given of various

animals—elephants, camels, &c.—which it is stated will be seen upon the stage at one time, together with five hundred and fifty performers. Then comes this startling announcement, "*The weight estimated at fifty tons.*" Probably this is the first instance on record of the merits of a dramatic performance being calculated by avoirdupois! And not only are certain dramas (so called) constructed for the express purpose of displaying the talents of the mechanist and scene-painter, but the aid of these latter has been called in to overlay the works of our elder and greater dramatists with meretricious attractions. This was shown in a recent revival of Shakspeare's "*Antony and Cleopatra*," which tragedy, by the way, was presented as a sort of sandwich between two of the most absurd and meaningless farces which it would be possible to discover in the whole range of dramatic literature. The design of the programme itself was suggestive. The names of the *adapter*, the scene-painter, and the costumier were printed in conspicuous type, whilst that of Shakspeare was only mentioned, as it were, casually. The performance commenced with an absurd procession of "supers" in tinselled dresses, gilt-paper helmets, and the like, and it was a long while before a word of the play was spoken. A similar procession ushered in the second act, and was followed by a modern ballet! Meanwhile, the acting was poor, and the elocution distinguished by much preaching and shouting. To compensate for this, there was some excellent scenery, including a striking view of Cleopatra's barge, and a representation of the naval battle of Actium, which was fairly bustling, and

was especially remarkable for the exertions of an individual in one of the foremost boats, who was elaborately beating nothing with a tin sword all the time that the scene was on. And this was a play of Shakspeare's!

It needs little argument to prove that such striving after external realism can never be thoroughly successful. The processions, the battles, and so forth, never look in the least like the real thing; and have simply the effect of drawing off the attention of the audience, both from the acting and the poetry. On the other hand, those actions and characteristics which *can* be fully and adequately treated realistically are, of necessity, the merest trifles. It is quite possible for a couple of footmen to bring in a set of folding stools and table, and spread a lunch in the sight of the audience, which two or three actors can then proceed to consume, with every appearance of reality. But in truth this is not, strictly speaking, acting at all; it is the interpolation of a little bit of fact in the midst of the fiction. And, after all, the scenery, however beautiful, will still be manifestly canvas, and the shadowless glare of the footlights will never look like the day. The actor demands from the audience the necessary suppositions as to time, place, and circumstance, and endeavours to aid them in such respects as far as he can; but when this has been done, his work as an artist is far from completed. All that gives the Drama its rank as a poetical art is yet to come.

If, however, we conclude that the object of the Drama is to express character and feeling, another

question arises as to the best mode of attaining this result. There are, in reference to this, two schools of Acting, which may be distinguished as the Spontaneous and the Studied. The distinction between these (though strictly a technical matter) bears importantly upon the functions of the art with which we are now concerned. The Spontaneous school is founded upon the principle that the actor ought to *feel* the part as much as possible, and let his acting develop itself naturally from his own emotions. The opposite school teaches that every gesture, and tone, and glance should be carefully studied, and its effect calculated beforehand; so that nothing is left to chance, or the impulse of the moment, but all is deliberately planned, and is carried out as the fulfilment of a definite intention. The one regards Acting as a subjective, the other as an objective art.

At first sight there seems much to recommend the former school. It seems especially calculated to involve the great characteristic of all true Art, the Imagination. Surely, it will be said, such a system will compel the actor to give us the mental and emotional aspect of the facts. These will of necessity receive the impress of his mind and heart, and be thus most effectually removed from the category of prosaic things. If, however, we look into the matter somewhat more closely, we shall see that the Spontaneous school of Acting aims at introducing—not Art at all—but Nature. The actor's business is to depict emotions, but to do so poetically; that is to say, to present them in some special light of his own, and not merely endeavour to realise them himself,

and then fling them out to us for *our* study. There are, too, many practical reasons for rejecting the Spontaneous system, apart from any particular theory of Art. It is, no doubt, possible for an actor, under some circumstances, to realise very intensely, in his own mind, the feelings and character of the person he is supposed to represent. And in the case of some actors of exceptionally great intellectual powers, and unusual natural grace and dignity of person, it is quite conceivable that a performance under such conditions would be not only valuable psychologically, but would possess all the elevating and attractive qualities of great Art. But it is only in the case of a most exceptional combination of gifts that such a result would be at all likely to follow. A man or woman of sufficiently impressible character to conceive fully the feelings of others, and of sufficient intellectual greatness and physical perfection to permit of the spontaneous outflow of such emotions into the best and most impressive gestures and tones, would be a rare phenomenon. We may, however, allow that such may possibly exist occasionally. It used to be said of Mrs Siddons that she did not *act*, but for the time *was* Lady Macbeth; and *apropos* of her personal feeling of the characters she performed, an amusing story is told to the following effect: On one occasion, on her way home from rehearsing one of her great tragic parts, she had occasion to do some shopping. She desired the shopkeeper to show her some print, but when it was brought, fell for some minutes into a deep fit of abstraction. Suddenly recollecting what she was doing, but without throwing

off the tragic mood, she turned to the astonished draper, and said in her most sepulchral tones, and with an awful expression of countenance, "DID YOU SAY THAT THIS WOULD WASH?" Assuming the story to be true, it might be accounted for by the simple effects of habit, acting upon a somewhat absent mind; but allowing it its full weight as an evidence that Mrs Siddons pursued the spontaneous method of acting, we must remember that that lady afforded an altogether exceptional instance of dramatic genius. It would never do to reckon upon a repetition, in other cases, of the effects which she produced. The popular ideas about "genius" are amongst the most dangerous which a man can get into his head. A person develops an ordinary liking for some particular pursuit. Foolish and ignorant friends tell him that he has undoubtedly a "genius" for it. The consequence is that he soon believes himself capable of reaching the top of the tree without the usual labour of climbing. It was as an answer to this mode of thought that the well-known aphorism was propounded, "Genius is nothing but a great capacity for taking pains." This, of course, is only true up to a certain point, but it expresses a great deal of wisdom. However extensive may be our intellectual powers in the first instance, we shall never achieve anything great or lasting without hard work to supplement them. People who fancy they have a genius of the automatic kind are common enough in all the departments of Art, and even when they are thoroughly beaten (as they generally are) by the plodding industry of less talented men, they frequently remain

unconvinced of their error, and ascribe to the stupidity or favouritism of the public a failure which is due merely to their own incompetence. In Acting, the Spontaneous school has obtained a wider footing than in any other art, and in England may be said to be dominant. The reason of this is, that the Drama appeals to a wider circle; and the applause of the multitude, which, as every one knows, may be gained by the crudest attempt at imitation, will serve to support the actor in spite of the adverse opinion of more competent judges. Further objections to the system are, that it involves a strain upon the actor's personal feelings which must be, if ever fully carried out, extremely injurious to him; and that even if an actor might rouse himself to the requisite pitch of emotion now and again, he can hardly be expected to repeat the self-transformation to an unlimited extent; and in any case, his personal feelings thus assumed must be at the mercy of numberless accidents, and his humour cannot be under his control at any and every moment. All these considerations tend to render the Spontaneous system unreliable as a good school of dramatic art.

What has been said applies, of course, chiefly to the higher departments of Acting; but if the more important parts in a play are supposed to be performed by the light of nature, we can hardly expect that study will be thought necessary for the minor characters. It is commonly held that any one can play a small part, since it involves but little exhibition of feeling. And for the same reason the average actor disdains to take any trouble about it, in proof of which it is only

necessary to point to the shambling, unintelligent way in which the subordinate characters are usually represented at our English theatres, and to the unutterably foolish manner in which our actors generally comport themselves in the parts of servants, and the like.

The opposite school looks at the matter from an entirely different point of view. It recognises the fact that the Drama exists, not for the sake of the actor, but for that of the audience. Accordingly, the former must not seek to develop his subject from within, but from without. Having decided what varied shades of emotion the circumstances of the fiction would naturally arouse in the person he is to represent, he is not concerned to feel them himself, but to depict them to others. He wants, *not to be, but to look like*, such and such a character; and he knows that the real emotions would lack colour on the stage, that much of what he has to represent may be seen every day in ordinary life, but that people fail to notice it there, and would fail to notice it if he were to bring the same thing on the boards. Accordingly, he sets himself to elucidate the character and passions of his assumed personality with a direct view to stage-effect.

It is not meant that an actor should be a cold, calculating, unemotional man. On the contrary, if the subject of the drama does not move him at all, he is not likely to affect others with it. Before he studies *how* to express, he must first study *what* to express. Hence it follows that, *cæteris paribus*, a part will always be best played by the man who has the greatest natural sympathy with the character.

There are some natures, for example, which are not easily roused, but which, when their depths are adequately stirred, develop extraordinary force. An impulsive, warm-hearted man will have some difficulty in entering into such a character, and will consequently have very little of value to tell us about it. In the same way, a very earnest, thoughtful man will hardly appreciate the gay *nonchalance* of some temperaments, or the way in which the facts of life strike a shallow mind. An actor who is naturally light-hearted will catch the intention of the dramatist, in such a case, more readily. The actor who studies rightly brings the whole force of his mind and heart to bear upon his investigation of the character, and the value of the effect produced will have an exact correspondence with the keenness of his intellect and the wideness of his sympathies. But he takes care that every gesture, every glance, every modulation of the voice, shall help to expound his conception of the part. And thus, in the highest result, his Art conceals itself, and produces the effect of Nature.

In this way the artist's mind leaves its impress upon his work much more surely and more beneficially than under the haphazard system of the Spontaneous school. Of course, no actor can be altogether unconscious of the necessity of adapting his performance to the conditions of stage-effect; but the results are very different when, on the one hand, this is recognised as the leading principle of the performance, and when, on the other, it is merely used as a corrective to another and an opposite system. It seems clear that the method of Studied

Acting must tend to produce in the actor a much higher estimate of the value and importance of his art ; and its effect in the case of the minor performers is very conspicuous. At the Comédie Française, an actor, who assumes the leading *rôle* at one representation, is content to bring in a letter, or announce a visitor, on another evening. A French actor, who has merely to fill the part of a servant at a hotel, will have his name in the bills, and will take some trouble to look like a waiter ; whereas, the English "super," not being a waiter, does not naturally act like one ; and it never occurs to him to give any particular study to the characteristics of waiters, the consequence being that he comes upon the stage looking like nothing earthly.

This conclusion with regard to the Spontaneous and Studied schools of Acting, may seem at first to be somewhat at variance with that before arrived at with respect to external realism. But it must be remembered that the first business of an actor is to act.* It is by means of this that his object is to be attained ; but it does not follow, because it is the only legitimate means to an end, that we should be justified in regarding it as a sufficient end in itself. Mr Irving "makes up" his face to an extraordinary resemblance to Charles I. or Cardinal Richelieu. If he did no more than this, it would be little to admire ; but when he comes forward, in Lord Lytton's play, with feeble gait and restless clutching

* It is thus that other arts may, upon occasions, become dramatic ; Painting and Sculpture, when they represent (purposeful) action, Poetry, when it describes, and Music, when it suggests it.

of his loose purple robe, which is huddled carelessly about him, there is something more than mimicry. There are the subtle indications, which come out more strongly as the play proceeds, of a great and fiery spirit—anxious and ambitious, passionate and astute—chafing and burning beneath the external weakness of the lean and tottering old man. The object of the Drama is to bring men and women before us, and to exemplify in them the thoughts and theories of the author. But we must have men and women, not automatic lay-figures. Everything that helps to give reality to the character—a wrinkle, a wig, a gesture, a small mannerism—is legitimate and valuable. It is against regarding the representation of these things as the end of Acting, that it is desired to protest. The imitative instinct finds its pleasure in them, and if they are allowed supremacy, they will speedily eat out all the higher qualities of the art.

Acting, then, is the poetry of Human Action, interpreting the wider poetry which it is the business of the dramatist to supply.

An evil to be guarded against, in connection with the Studied school of Acting, is the growth of classicism. The influence of a former classical system is chiefly felt amongst ourselves by the survival, in a few instances, of an Elocutionary school. This is principally distinguished by pomposity of utterance, elaboration of emphasis, and pump-handle gesture. It is not likely to do much harm at the present day, and is principally attractive to old-fashioned critics, in whom it awakens recollections of youthful days.

But whenever the technicalities of an art are highly cultivated, men have a tendency to reduce them to rigid rules. This is in all ways bad. An artist should be allowed to produce his effects in any way whatever, so that they are produced ; and the greatest men will often take the most unexpected means of achieving the desired result.

By Studied Acting, moreover, it is not meant to defend the reduction of everything to the level of the stage-manager's intellect. The value of every art depends upon the individuality displayed in it, and the actor must, above all things, study *for himself*. The experience of others may help him greatly, but to subordinate him to fixed rules will simply destroy the art.

The foregoing remarks have been almost wholly applicable to the Pathetic and Tragic Drama, and the higher departments of Comedy. The influence of Comedy in the sense of comicality must not be overlooked. The mechanism of every art may be employed to provoke laughter as well as tears ; and in the hands of one who has a thorough command of the means, the lighter effect is by no means unimportant. Comic or humorous Art is always more popular than its more serious counterpart. With the exception of a few individuals, who require the proverbial surgical operation to enable them to appreciate a joke, we may take it that every one enjoys fun. Even in cases where the subtleties of humour are not fully understood (and all the best wit lies deep), there is in Comedy a sufficient margin of gaiety and light-heartedness to prove attractive, and

it costs less for its fullest appreciation than for the right understanding of serious works. Many a man who honestly votes George Eliot a bore can revel in a page of "Pickwick;" and in our picture-galleries it is singular to notice how the fine lady who yawns behind her catalogue as she passes the pictures of a Millais, a Watts, or a Leighton, melts into something like interest when she comes to anything amusing—a bit of Irish peasant life by Erskine Nicol, or a quaint mediæval travesty by H. S. Marks. The majority of people find life monotonous, and want to be entertained. They will tell you that their ordinary avocations are sufficiently tiring and worrying, without their devoting their leisure to serious thought. They are grateful enough for anything which will amuse them, or even give them a little information, provided only that they do not need to take any trouble about it. In addition to these, the taste of many persons is so vitiated by what they think proper to call "pleasure," that they have no heart for anything else, and can only be roused to the feeblest enjoyment by a repetition of their accustomed stimulus. To both these classes Comedy appeals. It banishes disagreeable remembrances, and quiets unpleasant apprehensions, and clothes everything with a gay dress of laughter. On the other hand, those who think the most, work the hardest, and feel the most keenly, are also those who most need occasional recreation. Let no one think that the time given in moderation to honest, hearty fun is wasted. It is no more wasted than the time given to sleep, or to eating and drinking. Any of these

may be indulged in to excess, but all are necessary. Let the moralists preach as they may, people will be amused. It is inevitable, and it is right. In the Drama, Comedy is especially attractive, since it is more varied, and its limits of permissible humour wider than in other arts; whilst it has the advantage of the contagious influence of personal merriment. Its means are precisely the same as those of the more serious Drama. It, too, aims at presenting a picture of life, though of a different phase of it. It, too, must be founded upon Nature, and must select, combine, and enforce what it finds there. Comedy may have also its didactic side; for if it is worth anything, it will not laugh vacantly, but laugh at something; and so not only may hearts be lightened and minds refreshed, but if the subject of laughter be well chosen, folly may be exposed to fit ridicule, and pretension stripped of its disguise.

No rules can ever be given for Satire—it is a dangerous weapon, though a useful one; and its value must depend upon the good sense and good feeling of those who employ it. Personal mimicry is always contemptible, though it is as old as Aristophanes. Every man, however great and noble, has some peculiarity of manner or feature which may be jeered at by any one who thinks it worth his while to do so. Such mimicry displays ignorance of all that constitutes the real character of the man, and is stupid as well as vulgar. And although we may laugh when one actor caricatures the small mannerisms of another, or comes before the footlights "made up" to the exact personal resemblance of the

prime minister of the day, we must feel in seriousness that the art which can do no more than this has sunk very low indeed. One cannot but sympathise with the indignation of Dr Johnson when he was told that Foote was going to mimic him upon the stage. He asked "what was the common price of an oak stick?" and being answered sixpence, "Why then, sir," said he, "give me leave to send your servant to purchase me a shilling one. I'll have a double quantity; for I am told Foote means to *take me off*, as he calls it, and I am determined the fellow shall not do it with impunity."

Acting is of course an imitative art; but it becomes altogether degraded, when, instead of classes, it fastens upon individuals, and appeals to the passions of the mob, who will ever rejoice to see a distinguished man reduced by ridicule to something like a level with themselves.

But whilst Comedy, even in its more exuberant forms, is allowable, and, indeed, inevitable upon the stage, the same can hardly be said for the modern "Burlesque." Though the reckless travesty of all that is serious and important is not particularly wholesome or desirable at any time, it is not even necessary to take this ground of objection to the debased and contemptible productions which have of late years been put upon the stage under the above name. We might, perhaps, be induced to pardon the ridicule cast upon subjects about which we feel deeply, and to look with complacency upon grown men and women literally "playing the fool," if the result were in any way really funny. Hearty, genuine laughter

is at least a healthy exercise, and anything that is truly mirth - provoking is deserving of occasional patronage. But the modern Burlesque is not even laughable. A number of indecently-dressed girls reciting a farrago of silly puns, of whose very feeble point they seem in many cases totally unconscious, and lilting out vulgar songs, without even a pretence of knowing how to sing, constitute rather a melancholy than an amusing spectacle. When, in addition to such features of the entertainment, we consider the utter incoherence of the dialogue, the absence of plot, and the general inanity which characterises every part of the proceedings, down to the execrable shuffling which is every now and then made to do duty for dancing, the wonder is that such performances should ever have been tolerated in any civilised community. They seem, indeed, to be at last on the decline, and it is to be hoped that they will soon die out altogether, and be effectually buried out of remembrance.

The two great branches of Acting—Tragedy and Comedy—might be much further subdivided, and different effects pointed out as suitable to each department. There are Heroic and Domestic Tragedy, Melodrama and Tragi-Comedy, Genteel Comedy and Farce, and so on, almost *ad infinitum*. But while the effects to be produced are many, the principle which lies at the root of all is the same; and the very simple, and (as it would seem) obvious thought that the object of the Drama is to show us to ourselves as others see us, would, if it were more generally realised, raise both the spirit in which Acting

is undertaken, and the manner in which it is popularly judged.

It may be thought that this is too serious a light in which to regard Acting as a whole ; that it is essentially a popular amusement, and that we must not attempt to render it too exclusively didactic. This may or may not be so, but we are here considering the Drama as one of the Fine Arts, and as such, it is with the poetry—that is, with the passion and the beauty of it—that we have to do. No art should exist merely to minister to a vapid luxury, or to stimulate that weariness and lassitude which are so often the results of modern modes of life. Acting which has no purpose but to show forth the talents of the actors, and the perfection of their mechanical devices of imitation, may attract the public and remunerate the manager, but it has no right to rank with Imaginative Art at all. Feats of jugglery are as attractive and as valuable.

The present prospects of the Drama in this country are, perhaps, on the whole, encouraging. It is true that Burlesques and sensationalism, combined with external realism, and acting by the light of nature, have till recently had it all their own way ; but there is reason to hope that, with regard to the two former, the tide has fairly turned. The public have begun to perceive at last that indecency and blatant folly, impossible complications of incident, and spasmodic excitement are not the best elements of a rational entertainment. We have now, at least, one or two fairly good and original tragic actors, and several competent interpreters of Comedy, together with a few drama-

tists of respectable abilities who write plays not borrowed from the French. More than this can scarcely be said. But even this is hopeful after the utter dearth of true dramatic art which has till lately prevailed amongst us. Many characteristics of the stage at the present time are certainly far from satisfactory. Amongst these must be reckoned the absurd length of time for which pieces are allowed to "run." The commonest regard for the artistic value of the performance would dictate a more frequent change of programme. The utter weariness which every one connected with the theatre must feel, after the two-hundredth or three-hundredth representation of a play—the entirely mechanical way in which they must of necessity perform their duties, must be fatally opposed to artistic delineation of character. No man or woman can possibly go through the same thing night after night for months together with unimpaired interest or unfailing care. One by one the finer touches of the impersonation fall away, until at last nothing is left but the mere shell, the barest outline of the original performance. Those who have seen a play soon after its first representation, and again after it has been running for two or three months, will have noticed how entirely the spirit of it has evaporated in the interval. It goes smoothly indeed, but only because the performers have become mere machines.*

* At one theatre in London—the "Gaiety"—it is, we believe, a rule that no piece shall be allowed to run more than a certain time. It is to be hoped that before long such a system will become more general. If a piece has a great success it can always be revived.

On the other hand, an equally great evil lies in the want of proper attention to rehearsals. A piece is put upon the stage as soon as the actors know the words of their parts, the acting being supposed to come to them naturally. A first performance is very often little more than a full-dress rehearsal, and the public seem to look upon it quite in that light; critics freely suggesting that such an act should be compressed, or such a part modified. It does not seem to occur to any one that all this should be put right before the play is represented to an audience.

The "star" system, partly the cause and partly the result of this, is perhaps the worst feature of all. The success of a piece is frequently made to depend wholly upon the talents or reputation of a single actor or actress, the rest of the performance being almost left to take care of itself. The "star" travels about the country, performing the same parts over and over again, supported by scratch companies which seem to be got together for the sole purpose of filling the bills, so little trouble is taken in their selection. As the "star" knows his or her own parts, only such rehearsals are held as are necessary to prevent an absolute collapse, and the result is, of course, a lamentable exhibition of every form of error and incapacity.

It is said by some that the only remedy for the present state of things is subsidisation, either by a private society or by the State; but it may at least be hoped that enough artistic feeling will in time be evoked amongst actors themselves to produce better results.

There is still great danger that the elaboration of

scenery and costume may prevent the occurrence of a genuine and satisfactory revival of the poetry of Action ; but the whole history of the Drama has been that of a steady advance in external realism. Even from the masked and buskined performances of ancient Greece to those plays under the auspices of Louis Quatorze, wherein all the actors were attired in the court-dress of the period, and Julius Cæsar appeared in a full-bottomed wig, was an advance in realism ; for whereas in both cases the dress of the period was used, the later performances had the advantage of the faces of the actors being visible, and their gestures being unencumbered by artificial additions to their stature ; and since the introduction of correct national and individual costume by Voltaire, and its continued improvement in our own century, every change has been in the same direction. This advance is of course beneficial, if it be kept in due subordination to the main business of the theatre ; and we may be grateful for good scenery and appropriate dresses, if we have only competent actors to walk the boards and wear the costumes. The Drama now possesses, in these and other respects, many advantages which it had not in other days ; and if those who practise and those who witness it would but look upon it less as a business or a plaything, and more as an Art, we might hope to see it occupy a very high position indeed.



CHAPTER IV.

ELOCUTION.

DRAMATIC representation consists, as we have seen, of two parts—Acting and Elocution ; either of which can, under suitable conditions, be practised independently. Pantomime has already been discussed, as well as the complete Drama, and it now remains to say a few words on the subject of Elocution.

The imperfections of this latter as an art have long been recognised. Every one knows the story of the ancient orator's reply to one who asked him what was the first requisite of an elocutionist—"Action." The second requisite ?—"Action." The third ?—still "Action." So limited are the powers of oratory, *per se*, that although it is beyond the province of the elocutionist to assume a character completely, yet any one who desires to affect his audience strongly is compelled to eke out his resources by the aid of gesture and facial expression. Elocution is so thoroughly interpretative, so dependent upon extraneous sources for the origination of its ideas, that it can take rank only as an auxiliary art.

At the same time, it is not meant to assert that the various tones and modulations of the voice are

powerless to affect the mind and heart. On the contrary, their influence is sufficiently strong to make Elocution very important as a constituent part of dramatic representation. Its imperfection lies in the fact that it can hardly ever practically stand alone. Pantomime, though its capacity is very limited, does actually exist as an independent art ; whereas no elocutionist relies exclusively upon the power of vocal expression. He rejects, indeed, the various artifices of dramatic illusion—appropriate costume, scenery, and the like—nay, he usually stands behind a desk, and allows himself no more action than is compatible with his remaining at the same place. But with these limitations, he *acts* as far as possible. Facial expression and gesture are open to him, and his success will generally be in proportion as he uses them well. The great difference between the actor and the elocutionist is that the former assumes, in its entirety, a character not his own ; the latter is never supposed to depart from his individuality. The actor is conceived to *be* some one else for the time. The elocutionist is always himself. He merely describes. Even if he reads a play, or a dialogue in the first person, he is still supposed to be merely giving a graphic account of what others have done and said. So that, as a rule, the assumption which he has to make is that of great and absorbing interest in the subject, rather than that of a different personality. Of course, where the piece read or recited is a description, he may assume the character of the describer, who may be supposed to come before the audience. The performance is then to all

intents and purposes dramatic, though it does not chance to require the usual accessories of the stage. Bearing these facts in mind, we may conclude that the art of the elocutionist, as it generally exists, is only a restricted form of Acting, and its interpretative functions must be similar to those of the fuller art; the poetical element in it consisting in the colouring which the artist's own intellect and feeling give to the subject in dealing with it. Of course, there is this further difference between the two arts, that, whereas the first business of an actor is to act, the first business of the elocutionist is eloquence. Although the aid of gesture, &c., can hardly be dispensed with, the powers of voice are the basis upon which the art is built up.

The influence of vocal sounds depends no doubt, immediately, upon association of ideas, at least to a very great extent. We have been always accustomed to connect such and such tones with sorrow, such others with gaiety, such with sweet and gentle manners, and such, again, with a harsh and overbearing demeanour. But ultimately the pleasure or displeasure which we take in certain sounds may be traced to their inherent qualities, and the different modes in which they act upon our nervous mechanism. We like a voice, in the first instance, because it strikes pleasantly upon our organs of hearing; we dislike another voice for the opposite reason. These, then, become associated with pleasure and pain; and when we wish to excite either, we use the appropriate tone of voice. Thence another association arises: the sound is not only connected with physical conditions, but also with a certain mental

attitude, and so derives a new influence ; but the second association grows out of the first. An infant is frightened by a harsh voice. It is clear that the harshness is unpleasant to it, and it is also obvious that the infant itself can have no association of ideas with a harsh voice. The child's ear is sensitive in a certain way, which generally obtains throughout the human race. This peculiar sensitiveness may be inherited, but there it is ; and it can be acted upon by means purely mechanical. We are thus led to conclude that the influence of voice is practically due to its mechanical qualities. This applies to the rapidity, force, and inflection of the voice, as well as to its "timbre."

It would seem, in short, that eloquence, *per se*, is nothing but an imperfect form of Music—sound not yet crystallised into separate, definite tones, nor brought into subjection to the regular bonds of metre. As shadowing forth the influence of the fuller music stealing through the sense into the very souls of men, Elocution, apart from Acting, has its place here.



CHAPTER V.

EXECUTIVE MUSIC.

STRICTLY speaking, music cannot be said to exist without a performer. It involves of necessity the idea of sound, and sound cannot be caused by black marks upon paper. The composer conceives in his mind certain combinations and successions of sounds, and indicates how these may be produced ; but there is no real music until they are actually heard. All music, therefore, has somewhat of a transient character—the effects evoked pass away, though they may be evoked again and again. It may be remarked in passing, that besides their fugitive character, Dancing, Acting, and Elocution, tonic Music and Versification, possess the common feature of acting through the senses, unlike Verbal Poetry which acts rather through the mind ; and also that of acting by degrees and successions, instead of all at once, as in the case of pictures and statues.* It is perhaps wiser to regard

* The nearest approach to this progressive character which can be made in the latter arts, is by the use of such a method as that employed by Hogarth—viz., by representing each part of the action separately. Nevertheless, Hogarth's "pictorial dramas," as they have been called, are merely a series of tableaux, and possess no feature answering to the continuous progress of dramatic representation.

these arts thus, as comprehended in a single class, than to attempt to decide with great exactness upon their relative value and expressiveness. It would especially be difficult to settle the question of artistic precedence between a great actor and a great executive musician. The Fugitive Arts have been arranged in their present order, rather in consequence of their mutual association than of their different powers of expression. Executive Music naturally comes last, in view of its connection with the permanent department of the art. Indeed, this connection is so intimate, and it would be so useless to attempt to treat of the composer's work apart from its audible results, that it is intended to say very little here about the ideas which it is the function of the executant to convey; they will come more naturally under the head of "Music" in its general aspect.

A very difficult question, however, arises out of all interpretative art. It is this: How far ought a performer to endeavour to follow the lead of the author or composer, and how far to express himself? This becomes more important in Music than in Elocution or the Drama; because tonic poems are capable of a much greater variety of interpretation than verbal ones, and it is often difficult, if not impossible, to decide which rendering is the best.

With regard to vocal music, the question is comparatively simple. The words should always furnish the key to the interpretation, and the singing should be adapted to them. This seems self-evident; but it is by no means so obvious as to be always acted upon. Too often, composers set to music silly

verses, which can furnish neither themselves nor the singers with any noble thought, nor awaken any deep emotion. Feeble love-making, alternately with the feebler sentimental sorrows of unsuccessful attachments, form the staple of current song-literature. It is perfectly hopeless to get anything valuable out of these popular themes; and the practical result is generally, that the music is treated as if it were written independently of the words, and the voice were merely a musical instrument suitable to its performance. This is fostered by the absurd habit of muttering the words, so as to render them unintelligible, which obtains in drawing-rooms; and by the vanity and self-assertion of public singers, who are prouder of an extensive range and great flexibility of voice, than of clearness of perception and earnestness of feeling; and it is also encouraged by a prosaic public, which will always applaud a singer who executes elaborate flourishes with his voice, rather than one who conscientiously tries to bring out the beauties of the music, and to illustrate the poetry of the words—when they have any. Although Music is in its nature indefinite, it is capable of being attached to definite ideas, and of giving them a force and intensity obtainable by no other means; and this function should not be lightly set aside, especially when doing so involves the falsehood of pretending to interpret a song, the words of which are in reality disregarded. Singers need not be too proud to expound the thoughts of others, or desire in preference to appear in the character of animated organs. Whether instrumental music is superior to vocal, may be fairly

open to discussion; but when Music does consent to act as the interpreter of words, it is surely not too much to say, that no consideration of any other possible effect should be allowed to interfere with their due expression and elucidation.

Very curious results are sometimes produced by ignorance or carelessness of this part of a singer's duty. It is the commonest thing to hear church choirs chant "The glorious company of the Apostles"—with bated breath, and then, suddenly, as if startled, burst out into "PRAISE THEE." Why the latter part of the sentence should be exploded at the congregation in this way, seems difficult to understand. Again, a certain Versicle and Response in the daily prayer of the Church of England run as follows :—

V. Give peace in our time, O Lord.

R. Because there is none other that fighteth for us, but only thou, O God.

This is certainly not very happily expressed, and Tallis' music lends itself somewhat readily to a melancholy expression. Accordingly, it is usual to hear the Response sung in a plaintive and woe-begone manner, as if entire dependence upon the Almighty were the most hopeless state of things conceivable. Here and there an organist may be found who has the good sense to remedy this, and to give out the last phrase as an exulting climax. Instances of eccentricity in the rendering of secular music will, doubtless, be readily supplied by the reader from melancholy personal experience. It is greatly to be desired that people would take the

trouble to consider what they sing from a literary, as well as a musical, point of view.

The question how far a performer may assert his own individuality in instrumental music is not so easy of solution. If we set ourselves to sing "Comin' thro' the Rye," we have certain definite sentiments to express, and have no business to disregard them; but suppose that instead of singing, we sit down to play it upon the piano. Are we bound to retain the original sentiment? We may give it out gloomily in a minor key as a solemn dirge, or make it the theme of lively, dance-suggesting variations. A case is recorded of the air known as "The Perfect Cure" being performed as a voluntary (*adagio*) at a country chapel, and being much appreciated as a piece of sacred music. Of course, in such cases the work of the composer comes in to a very great extent. Fresh harmonies are introduced, and the original theme is surrounded by altogether novel accessories. But, in a less degree, the same thing may be done where the notes of the composer are strictly adhered to. Some pianists will make the Funeral March in Beethoven's "Grand Sonata" quite a gay and festive performance, and the martial air of "Scots wha ha'e" has actually been set to the plaintive words of the "Land o' the Leal."

The following general rules may be laid down. First: Any air may lawfully be taken from its setting, and made the subject of a different treatment. The business of the composer lies in

"Untwisting *all* the chains that tie
The hidden soul of harmony."

And he may sometimes perceive some link in the

sweetness of the air which has quite escaped the notice of the originator of the melody, and so may set free the harmony in an altogether unexpected direction. Secondly: When an executant undertakes to perform a work of any composer, he has no right to alter it. If he thinks he can compose a better piece, let him do so; but it is an impertinence to tamper with a work which he is content to accept. Thirdly: Within these limits, it is not only permissible, but essential to the dignity and efficiency of his art, that the executant should throw into the performance the greatest possible amount of feeling and originality.

The question still remains: What is to be considered "alteration" as forbidden by the second rule? Are we bound to observe all the *f*'s and *p*'s and *sf*'s, and the time-marks of the composer? Are we to consider ourselves at liberty merely to give our own expression where none is indicated in the score, and ought we to follow every sign of the composer's intention? This is one of those cases where no precise rule can be given; but it may be remarked that it is always safer, especially when dealing with any of the great masters of the art, to follow every hint, however slight, of the intentions of the author. It is not wise to assume hastily that we know better than he. Probably, however, the following concessions may, with some caution, be made to the liberty of the executant: viz., that when the music is felt by him very strongly to be susceptible of different treatment from that indicated by the composer, he may vary the expression as an occasional reading; and that,

where the same theme occurs several times in the same composition, he may generally give a second or third interpretation side by side with the original expression as shown in the score. Further, the utmost licence must obviously be conceded to the executant's choice of expression in cases where there are no indications to guide him; and out of all the different readings which we hear given of good music, it is quite impossible to say which was contained in the original thought of the composer. Perhaps he himself would have played the music differently at different times; but it cannot be supposed that more than one side of its emotional structure was felt by him at the time of its composition, and therefore it is quite possible to evolve from his harmonies beautiful effects which he had never dreamed of. The same argument may, of course, be used with regard to passages where he has announced his own reading. Indeed, a performer might plausibly urge, "Who knows but that if Beethoven had chanced to feel this passage as it has struck me, he might have marked it differently?"

The reason of this possible variety of interpretation will appear more plainly when we come to speak of the functions of Music as a whole; but at least no one who feels music at all strongly, can doubt that, after every possible allowance has been made for due respect for the composer's score and expressional marks, there remains a very wide scope for the executant's originality.

If the latter were not permitted to express himself in and through the materials given him by his brother artist, then Executive Music would have no place

amongst the poetical arts at all. The composer furnishes the germ of the whole. Every effect of which the music is capable is contained potentially in that which he supplies; but the actual development is in great part due to the performer. His imagination is at work as well as the other's, and the result is the product of the intellectual and emotional part of both. How far the composer is to be credited with effects which he did not intend, is a curious and difficult problem. Sir Arthur Helps suggests a similar puzzle in reference to a different matter. Some friends have been discussing the handwriting of eminent men, and complaining of its frequent illegibility. Amongst other badly-written letters, one is produced which is especially unreadable. One of the friends succeeds in making out the words "My dear" at the commencement, and several other words here and there, but cannot give a single sentence complete. Then says the other: "There is a curious story connected with this letter. It treats of a most important subject, and embodies much of the wisdom and wit of the writer. The man to whom it was addressed called in the aid of a government clerk, who was said to be very skilful in deciphering handwritings, and he gave in writing his version of it. That version seemed to be very clever and very deep. Further investigation by other persons showed that the government clerk's rendering was totally wrong. For instance, he had rendered a certain scribble as 'ideal,' when the word was in reality 'inherent.' The letter, therefore, according to the latest views of interpretation, and

as I believe the right ones, gave a new construction, also a very plausible one. Then came some acute fellow, and said, 'The second reading of the letter is the right one, but the first evolves a very grand theory. To whom does it belong? Not to the writer of the letter, for he never intended it. Not to the government clerk, for he was a plain, practical man, who knew nothing whatever about the subject. Not to us, who have thus had a beautiful theory put before us, which we could not fail to understand, but which we certainly did not invent or initiate.'"

The same thing occurs constantly in Music, except that in it there is no difficulty in assigning a full share in the result to the performer. The question is, how much of it is due to the composer? It is like a man digging from the earth a piece of beautiful, glittering spar, which a geologist splits, and finds a fossil within. The geologist would not have discovered the fossil if the spar had not been brought to him; the other finds the spar, but does not know all that it contains.

One thing is certain: that Music affords, in some way, an outlet for every shade of emotion on the part of the executant. The expression possible to him will, of course, lie within certain fixed limits; but it will vary very distinctly. To take an instance,—how much of dreamy sadness may be infused into the soft melody of Weber's "Last Valse"—of sadness mixed with hope, of tender regret for the past, as well as glad confidence for the present and the future! But as this mood steals over the player, a strong and overwhelming yearning will sometimes come upon

him, a terrible consciousness of present doubt, a wild, eager longing for surer and better things; and as the ever-recurring accent of the music makes itself felt within him, he seizes on it with a passionate self-assertion, and rings out his determination to conquer, in a series of rapid, crashing chords: soon subdued again to tones which tell of much to be borne as well as much achieved. Perhaps to many persons such sudden impulses may appear ridiculous; but to some they are all too real, and it is for them no slight relief to pour forth their overcharged feelings through a medium which not only lifts off the pressure from their hearts, but also seems to have within itself a kind of sympathy.

Some branches of Executive Music are more confined than others to the interpretation of already existent ideas. Such are orchestral playing and part-singing. In these, a self-restraint, not unwholesome as a discipline, must of necessity be practised; whilst in the former, the executant must be content to accept the interpretation given by an intermediate personage—the conductor. There is much true and exalted pleasure in the loyal subordination of one's self to a great master of Music; and that the intelligent rendering of this form of Poetry may be far from mechanical, all will agree who have taken part in its interpretation even as single units amongst many.

Ever as we look around, we shall find the lack of earnestness and depth of purpose lying at the root of all decay and failure of Art. We find it here. It is the undue exaltation of mechanical precision and mere executive brilliancy which injures the cause of

Music most severely. Dash and clatter and display are sure to be applauded ; not always does equal favour attend the simple, earnest artist, who cares for the music very truly, and feels it very keenly. His quiet delight in all that he plays or sings may easily fail to find an echo in the comfortable carelessness of a general audience. But, allowing it to be inevitable that some part of such unobtrusive merit should remain unappreciated, it is high time for it to be generally understood that mechanical excellence implies nothing in a musician, but such a command of the means of his art as is presupposed by his coming forward as an artist at all ; and that not all the honours and rewards of foreign *dilettanti* potentates, nor all the flourishes of professional self-confidence, can combine to render the most brilliant and elaborate display of manual or vocal skill an adequate compensation for the absence of that heart-feeling which alone can raise interpretation to the dignity of Poetry.

PART III.

THE PERMANENT ARTS.



PART III.—THE PERMANENT ARTS.

CHAPTER I.

MUSIC.

THERE are four material parts of Music: 1. Discrete Sounds; 2. Time or Rhythm; 3. Tune or Melody; and 4. Harmony.

Of these the first is the most fundamental, the three others are nothing but modes of arranging sounds which are capable of existing independently. And not only do these sounds form the basis of even the most elaborate and complicated music, but they have also an important power of influencing our feelings by virtue of their inherent quality or *timbre*. Music in its entirety is a purely human production. There is scarcely anything in Nature which can be properly called either melody or harmony, certainly nothing which could ever suggest a sonata or a symphony. Not all the cries of far-off sea-birds, nor carols of feathered songsters; not all the splash of brooklets, nor thunder of mountain torrents; not all the soft chatter of trees, nor sighs of melancholy winds, will

ever furnish us with a single bar of music. Yet they are musical. It is not only that poets have said so; we feel them to be worthy of the name. Have we not just now spoken of "carols" and "songsters" in reference to birds? and do we not feel that these terms are appropriate? Yet birds sing no definite *tune*, nor do they observe any regular time or rhythm. What, then, is the source of the pleasure which they convey? It is to be found in the quality of the sounds which they thus irregularly utter. There can be no question that different sounds, though identical in pitch, may affect us very differently; some being altogether harsh and disagreeable, and others delightful, though at the same time quite various. The music of Nature is altogether independent of our systems; but it can touch our hearts, and is very Music, for all that.

And when reduced to an art, the various influences of different *timbres* are equally conspicuous. An organ, a flute, a bassoon, a violin, a harp, a pianoforte—each affects us in a distinct manner. As for the bagpipes, one cannot wonder it should be recorded of the English that

"Dumfounder'd they heard the blaw, the blaw !
Dumfounder'd they a' ran awa', awa'
Frae the hundred pipers an' a', an' a' !"

Yet we must admit that there is something inspiring in the monotonous grinding tones of those instruments.

It is not necessary to dwell longer on this feature of Music, except to point out how the consideration of *its* fundamental character and value bears upon the

importance of "touch" and tone in the case of the executive musician. From what has been said, it will be seen that it should be one of the first objects of the performer to bring out all the force and sweetness of his instrument. Probably this cannot be taught: excellence of tone no doubt depends upon the possession of an exquisitely sensitive ear; but we may be quite sure that it is useless to expect anything like good music from one who treats his instrument—whatever it may be—as a mere machine, and has none of that indescribable sympathy with it, with which a true musician seems almost to awaken it into intelligence. Every one who loves the poetry of Sound must have shuddered at that heartless flourish upon the keys of the piano with which the popular drawing-room performer so frequently commences his distressing operations.

The second department of Music mentioned above, though, as we have seen, not necessary to its existence, is yet characteristic of it when it becomes an art. The sense of time is implanted very deeply in man's nature. Rhythm of any kind is always more or less delightful; it would seem to correspond with that order which we see everywhere around us in the universe, and which it is therefore not surprising to find echoed within ourselves. As regards the movements of the body, the love of order finds its expression now in the march, now in the dance, according as it is connected with serious or with lighter purposes. The rhythm of Music is so exactly adapted to aid in originating and sustaining this regularity of movement, that it has been universally

employed for the purpose. We have here, then, another source of the widespread power of the art. Time is not, indeed, one of its most valuable features; but its influence is undeniable. Probably nothing in the world is so inspiriting as martial music, the power of which seems to be almost entirely dependent upon its carefully-accented rhythm. The influence of drums alone is extraordinary, and yet the note of these instruments can hardly be said to be either pleasant or the reverse. The effects produced with them must be altogether due to the time, which they so well serve to mark. The roll of drums is the fullest possible realisation of abstract rhythm.

At the same time, it should be borne in mind that rhythm, with all its power, is rather a convenient adjunct than an essential part of Music; and it should be placed in due subordination to other more important constituents. Only in dance-music, and the like, whose rhythm is the very object of its existence, the time should be allowed due prominence, and be strongly and accurately marked. And in all music a certain rhythm is of value, as showing the order and purpose of the composer's ideas more fully than these could be conveyed by mere wandering combinations of notes.

But we can hardly be said to have Music, as the term is usually understood, until we have arrived at the orderly succession of sounds, which we call melody. It will be seen that the pleasure we derive from tune is traceable to the same cause as the pleasure of harmony. It is in the first instance mechanical. The ear is pleasurably affected by certain

combinations of sound, unpleasantly by others ; and in the same way, the ear, after receiving vibrations of a certain velocity, is prepared to receive certain others of different velocities with pleasure, but some with pain. The elaborate mechanism of the ear may be adduced as showing how perfectly this part of our bodily structure is adapted to the reception of purely mechanical impressions. A wonderful apparatus has in recent times been discovered by the Marchese Corti, in that part of the ear called the "labyrinth." Professor Tyndall tells us that it is "to all appearance a musical instrument, with its chords so stretched as to accept vibrations of different periods, and transmit them to the nerve filaments which traverse the organ. Within the ears of men, and without their knowledge or contrivance, this lute of 3000 strings" (which is said to be the number of fibres in Corti's organ) "has existed for ages, accepting the music of the outer world, and rendering it fit for reception by the brain. Each musical tremor which falls upon this organ selects from its tensioned fibres the one appropriate to its own pitch, and throws that fibre into unisonant vibration. And thus, no matter how complicated the motion of the external air may be, those microscopic strings can analyse it, and reveal the constituents of which it is composed."* And not only does the mechanism of our auditory apparatus suggest a purely mechanical source for the pleasure or pain conveyed by the vibrations of the air, but we can reduce the various phenomena of Sound to mathematical expressions. It would be difficult to

* Tyndall on Sound, Lecture viii.

* The following table, which gives the approximate relations of the intervals between the notes of the diatonic scale, will show how far, in the case of ordinary keyed instruments, strict accuracy has to be sacrificed to convenience.

C D E F G A B C

51 46 28 51 46 51 28

It is evident that if the instrument were tuned accurately to this scale, it would be impossible to play upon it in more than one key. For if D were taken as the keynote instead of C, the practical method of inserting a semitone between C and D, and between F and G, would not produce a precisely similar succession of intervals, but only one approximately like the original type. Pianofortes and the like are therefore so tuned as to distribute the error amongst the intervals of the scale, in such a way as to reduce it to very small proportions, so that it does not offend the ear. What is called "unequal temperament" is sometimes used in the case of organs; that is to say, only certain keys are provided for, the consequence being that music in other keys cannot be played, but greater accuracy is ensured in those which are practicable. This is rendered desirable, because the notes of an organ are not merely struck sharply, but are held on; any discordance is therefore more noticeable. A violin can of course be played with strict accuracy in all keys.

seventh and eighth, notes being much less than the others; that it admits different series of intervals, which we distinguish as "major" and "minor" scales, the latter having more than one form,—these and many other similar circumstances can only be explained upon the supposition that the sensitive nerves of hearing are in some way hurt by transition from some states of vibration to some others, while transitions of a different character are better suited to the structure of the organ.

This very simple solution of the problem serves equally well to explain the phenomena of harmonies and discords; and if we accept it, we shall see that the various elaborate systems of harmony, &c., which have been produced from time to time, are merely classified statements of facts. Butler tells us that

" All a rhetorician's rules
Teach nothing but to *name* his tools;"

and, in the same way, many who are quite unlearned about "tonics" and "dominants" and "mediants," yet feel truly what chords are beautiful or the reverse. Harmony is a most useful practical study, but it will not help us in our present inquiry. There is no particular reason why simple seconds and sevenths should be bad combinations, except that we do not like them. Monsieur Jourdain talked prose all his life without knowing it; and we shall never like unresolved discords any the better for being ignorant that the theorists have pronounced against them. It is quite possible that some different system of Music may in the future be discovered, which may equally satisfy

our senses, and at the same time set all previous theories at naught. The Greeks, with all their high æsthetic culture, seem to have taken pleasure in a kind of Music which must have been widely different from our own ; and it is conceivable that the exhaustion of possible musical combinations, which so distressed John Stuart Mill in his young days, may be succeeded (if it ever occur) by the invention of a form of the art founded upon altogether new principles.

So far, we have considered Music merely in its mechanical aspects ; but it is evident that with reference to its functions as an art, we must examine the sources of its power more deeply. It is abundantly clear that its influence over the minds and passions of men is very great. Yet it cannot, like Poetry, appeal to the intellect, or touch the heart, by the subtle tracing of analogies, or the placing of mental and material phenomena in new and wondrous lights. It cannot, like Painting or Sculpture, bring to us the facts of Nature surrounded with a halo of human interest and feeling ; nor can it, like Architecture, appeal to associations with the ideas of service and purpose. Nay, it does not even depend upon association of ideas at all ; at any rate, every one will allow that we are not conscious of its doing so. Wherein, then, lies its power ? Simply in its Beauty. In its exquisitely subtle adaptation to our physical constitution.

Let no one suppose that it is degraded by its connection with the material part of our nature : all the arts, except Verbal Poetry, affect us through the medium of the senses ; but they do not therefore fail to reach the deepest springs of our being. We

shall probably never be able to explain the nature of the connection between material and spiritual phenomena; but our higher and better part is so bound up in its corporeal receptacle that what touches one touches the other also. So the pleasures of Sound can fire us with sudden passion, or soothe us to a gentle peace; can break up our cold, hard thoughtfulness with bright and eager joy, or sink into our hearts with a deep, ineffable pathos, which is all sorrow and yet all pleasure too. Music, affecting in subtle ways the delicate fibres of our physical being, reaches thereby the sources of our strongest and deepest emotions.

Now all emotions are reducible under the two great heads of pleasure and pain. Each of these embraces a great variety of shades of emotion. Intense rapture, joyous excitement, sober pleasure, and simple satisfaction which hardly rises above the level of indifference, are all different degrees of the same order of feeling. Thus, the sphere of Music is a very extensive one, although we may consider its powers of expression as limited to the two main phenomena of emotion—elation and depression. It will be seen, however, if we consider the nature and origin of Music, that it cannot in any way take note of the intellectual or social causes which may give rise to these emotions. Thus, the particular combination of passionate delight with eager desire, which we call "love," can only appear in Music as a certain deep, unsatisfied tenderness which is quite unable to indicate the source from which it arises, and may, therefore, be easily referred to an altogether different

origin. So, too, sorrow may appear in Music very distinctly, but its utterance is not sufficiently articulate to explain whether it is due to remorse, or despair, or loss of something dear. One more restriction is to be noted in the powers of Music. *Sound* can give rise to definite pain; but Music, being a Fine Art, rejects this function; and not as the other arts do, merely as a principle, which is sometimes overlooked or disregarded, but from necessity. Painting can make itself so attractive, by means of its colour and form, as to persuade us to take an interest even in horror and vice. Music has no alternative resource; it must attract us by the beauty of Sound, or not at all, and hence, in its deepest solemnity, its profoundest grief, it uses ever some form of loveliness wherewith to compel us to attention. For pure, unalloyed pain, it has no voice.

Most people perceive that Music is in some way "the language of the emotions;" but many are led away by this popular formula into very vague and unphilosophical fancies as to its functions and capabilities. A book published a short time ago by the Rev. H. R. Haweis, entitled "Music and Morals,"*

* The title of this book was probably chosen on account of its alliteration, for a very small portion of the work has reference to morality in its connection with Music, unless, indeed, the short biographies of musical celebrities are designed to illustrate that aspect of the subject. But it is this immorality aspect, and the private character of some eminent musicians, such as Mozart, which was excellent; that other great composers, such as Handel and Beethoven, were men of average amiability; whereas the morality of some, such as Chopin, was rather questionable. The title is, however, borrowed from Mr. Haweis' book, that musicians, in a moral point of view, are just as petty and like other people: a conclusion which is not very novel. Apart from the philosophical ideas of the

affords a notable illustration of this; and as it has achieved a great amount of popularity, it may be useful to notice briefly some of the views put forth in it. The author sets out with the popular assertion above mentioned, and proceeds to prove it in this wise. He first analyses emotion, and by the help of a story of a man in a desert who, in the extremity of thirst, discovers a pool of water which proves to be brackish, and who is ultimately relieved by another individual with a waterskin, he comes to the conclusion that emotion exhibits five essential characteristics—viz., 1. Elation and Depression. 2. Velocity. 3. Intensity. 4. Variety. 5. Form. It may be remarked that intensity, as applied to emotion, is comprised under elation and depression, expressing nothing more than the greater or less degree of the pleasure or pain; while velocity and variety may be predicated of every conceivable kind of psychical phenomenon. It would be difficult to understand how emotion could be said to have *form*, if Mr Haweis had not supplied us with a diagram in which elation and depression are represented by lines going up and down, varied intensity by thick and thin lines, and so forth; so that the so-called *form* would seem to be only another way of stating the qualities previously mentioned. The author then remarks, that if we look around for some art-medium presenting all the five characteristics which he has enumerated, Music naturally suggests itself, and is thus evidently proved to be the required language of emotion. The

author, the book contains a great deal of information, is pleasantly written, and is in many respects interesting.

stave of eight notes offers every opportunity for elation and depression; the different durations of notes—quavers, crotchets, &c.—and the marks *adagio*, *allegro*, and the like, supply the different velocities; the *pp's*, *ff's*, and such marks as *crescendo*, &c., give intensity, and any musical score affords abundant illustrations of variety. As an example of "form," *i.e.*, the arrangement of the foregoing features, we are furnished with a diagram of the "Blue Bells of Scotland," showing its various elations and depressions. It is hardly necessary to point out seriously the fallacy of such a mode of reasoning. The theory takes no note of that most important element of Music—harmony, which certainly has as much to do with the expression of joy or sorrow as melody has. The author can scarcely expect us to believe that every time the sound rises we are elated, and every time it sinks, depressed. If so, we should be in a most perplexed state of mind after listening to the simplest air. The whole argument is an example of our old friend the "undistributed middle" of the logicians: "Emotion has such and such five qualities, Music has five similar qualities, therefore Music is the language of emotion." We might say the same thing of Dancing. The dancer rises and descends; he sometimes moves quickly and sometimes slowly; he is now eager and now languishing; he executes a variety of steps, and his dance assumes definite forms or figures. Music *does* express every shade of elation and depression, but this is because it acts through the subtle influence of physical pleasure and pain.

Resting the art, then, upon this simple basis of ultimate fact, let us see what results are thereby brought under our notice. At first, it would seem that the limitations to the scope of Music recognised above must betoken corresponding restrictions in its value and importance; but, so far from this being the case, we shall find that these very limitations are the sources of its power, and that its severance from certain classes of ideas serves only to ensure its greater purity, whilst its influence and attractiveness remain unimpaired.

It is evident, for example, that its inability to express the darker emotions of the heart is an unmixed gain. There is always the greatest danger in the admission of evil into any art. It is too likely to prove attractive, even when brought forward for the express purpose of exposing its deformity. It is too possible that pruriency may gloat over it, rather than that indecision may be repelled. It was shown in a former paper, that Art must necessarily attract us by its inherent qualities, and nothing ought to attract us by the fascination of evil. Evil has therefore, properly, no place in the arts at all; but it frequently intrudes into them, disguising itself now under the absorbing interest of an analysis of human passions, now lurking behind the subtle, attractive force of shapes and tints, now claiming privilege as an offshoot of the "play-instinct" of mankind. Music alone resolutely bars it out. The art may be foolish and shallow, but it can never be vicious.

Further than this, there is no tragedy in Music.

It never absolutely pains us. It will readily move us to tears, but not with an unredeemed and hopeless sorrow. It reaches, indeed, to the lowest depths of our despair, but only to lift us out of them. There is no pride, no envy, no disappointment in Music—only sympathy. It stirs the emotions, but it soothes, elevates, beautifies all. Thus it becomes one of the greatest of all earthly comforters. When we are weary and dull, it throws a soft light into the midst of the uninteresting, commonplace facts of daily life, and leaves a glory there. Mr Haweis, in this connection, talks about “dreaming at the piano,” and “caressing the deliciously cool ivory keys ;” but Music is something better than a vague outlet for sentimentalism ; it is a realisation of one form, at least, of perfect beauty and purity. It has, indeed, a power over that indefinite dissatisfaction, that paltry gloominess which some foolish persons seem to wish to cultivate. This it will help to clear away ; it is too good and fair to coexist with it. But it has also consolation for our deeper and more real troubles. It goes fully into our grief, but shows us the hope, nay, the joy, which rightly belongs to it. It is no easy task to believe in the ultimate rightness and justice of the facts we see around us—in the reign of law amidst apparent disorder, in the future gain to be reaped from apparent loss, in the permanent benefit of present sorrow ; but if anything will help us to a deeper faith, surely it is this art of Music, whose most intricate complexity is but a more elaborate order, and which, when it “tells of saddest thought,” does so in its “sweetest songs.”

Nor does it use its beauty only in these subdued and sorrowful spheres of emotion. It can be light and graceful, playful, even humorous. Stern, indeed, must be those feelings which can resist the contagion of its gaiety, sluggish those young forms which will not move in sympathy with its rhythmic measures, cold those hearts which its triumphant grandeur cannot rouse into enthusiasm. It is the great enchanter that can not only subdue the gloomy Caliban, but has also power to command the tricky spirit, Ariel, to do its bidding. If we welcome that which shows us the beauty underlying sorrow, we should also rejoice in the beauty which lives with unalloyed joy. Life is, after all, not wholly gloomy, not all sad. There is fruit of real happiness to be gathered even here, and pure and healthy pleasures to be tasted if we choose. Surely we ought to be grateful for an art which can raise us with its free gladness above the petty levels of care and dulness to which we are too ready at times to sink. It brings no wild, fevered excitement to its aid ; it is no coarse dissipation which dulls the feelings to serious things. It is bright with a simple, honest, hearty delight, in which there is no hurt nor danger. Nor is this all. The beauty of Music is something entirely apart from ourselves. Some of it we can comprehend, some only apprehend ; but much of it rises to a height which, while we can admire, we can never attain to, and thus realises with a certainty, and to a degree, exhibited by no other art, the true features of the Sublime. Not greatness which overshadows and overawes us only, but in its mightiest sublimity,

beautiful still. And all this is the result of its limitation, of its inability to deal with anything but Beauty.

Again, Music, while furnishing a language for the emotions, can only do so quite indefinitely. Its speech is incoherent ; we can detect the mood, but neither tense, number, nor person. Music can

“ Swell the soul to rage, or kindle soft desire,”

but it can never give the reason why. This certainly seems at first like an inferiority. But here, again, we shall find the limitation in many ways a distinct gain. In the first place, it removes the effects of Music from the category of stereotyped and fixed results. The work of the composer carries with it not merely certain definite achievements, but also vast possibilities. Good music is an almost inexhaustible mine. Treasure lies upon the surface, but dig deeper and you will find more within. The performer has always a living power, not a mere dead fact to deal with. Then, again, the listener is offered the imagination of two men in the music which he hears. First, that of the composer in creating, then that of the executant in interpreting. This is, of course, true to a certain extent of all interpretative Art, but in none so notably as in Music. The actor does, indeed, give his own view of the character supplied by the dramatist, but he cannot alter the circumstances of the play. The musician has only the indefinite outlines of emotions given him, which he may fill up and colour as he pleases. And different men fill them up in very different ways. It is quite startling sometimes to hear music, which

we have learned and loved, played by strange fingers, —it seems a different thing. The phrases we have been accustomed to render as faint and infinitely delicate whispers we find rung out with sharp assertion; the bars of sober harmony which we have explored slowly and deeply have developed a rich melody which we had never fully perceived. Music is so subtle a thing, that the merest accent—a difference in touch—a slight variation of loudness or softness, will make all the difference in expression.

Finally, the listener has not only these changeful forms placed before him, but he has the widest possible field of interpretation left at his own disposal. It is thus, from the very indefiniteness of the art, that Music derives its large sphere of appeal. Each listener assimilates it to his own feelings and fancies. One man takes a piece of music to suggest the sparkling ripples of the sea, another finds in it a love-story, to another it is a dream of effort and hope in the moral difficulties of life. Bring out either of these ideas definitely, and two of the men will have no sympathy with it. Music, with its indefiniteness, appeals to all. It does not aim so much at imparting ideas of its own, as at taking the ideas which it finds already existent in the mind, and strengthening, beautifying, and purifying them. Many persons, although at times they appreciate good music thoroughly, do not always find themselves in the mood for it; that is to say, their minds are already too active to leave room for the influence of Music in calling forth the feelings. But when the emotions

can be placed under its sway, Music has a word for every man, and the characters most unlike in all other respects conform in their common subjection to the power of this art.

Music does not rely for its power upon any imitation of Nature. The music existing therein presents, as we have seen, little melody and less harmony, whereas all the greatest effects of musical art depend entirely upon these. This does not contradict the assertion made in speaking of Beauty in a former chapter—viz., that the standard of Beauty is to be sought in the loveliness of Nature. The beauty of Music does depend upon the natural qualities of vibrating mediums, but we are in this case left to find them out for ourselves. An exquisite harmony, or a tuneful melody, has something of the nature of a discovery. Natural sounds contain the music potentially, only they do not give it out until reduced to regular order, and questioned by imaginative men. The emotions which it is the province of Music to express lie deep within the breast, and the outward formulation of them in this art can therefore have no connection with other external things. It must, from its very nature, be spontaneous, and to call it an "imitative art" is altogether a misnomer.

The indefinite character of Music, which has been so much insisted upon above, has led some persons to conclude that it loses, rather than gains, by being connected with the definite meanings of words. Instrumental music, they urge, is the highest. If it

is once tied down to the limits of verbal signification, half of its power is relinquished. On the other hand, people naturally connect Poetry and Music—"the sister and the brother"—and in their origin they were inseparable. Have they, now that they have so well learned to stand alone, no sympathy with each other, nothing to gain from mutual intercourse? Yes, say some, Poetry gains much, but Music loses breadth, and yields some portion of her influence. This is true, but the question remains, whether it may not sometimes be an advantage to give up something which exists only potentially, for the sake of something less extensive, but fixed and certain—whether, in fact, a definite idea in the verbal hand is not worth a host of possibilities in the musical bush. To this, the answer must obviously be, that all depends upon what the ideas conveyed by the words are worth. Music unquestionably loses by being tied down to the trash so common in the drawing-room at the present day. So stupid is some of this rubbish, that the composers have obviously used the words merely as a peg whereon to hang the music, without a thought of explaining or enforcing the one by the other. But if we secure really great ideas in the words, it will be no loss to the music to be connected with them. Glance, for instance, at the book of "The Messiah."

"Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God.—Unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government shall be upon His shoulder: and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.—He shall feed His flock like a shepherd, and He shall gather the lambs with His arm, and carry them in His bosom, and gently lead

those that are with young—Surely He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows : He was wounded for our transgressions ; He was bruised for our iniquities ; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and with His stripes we are healed.—Hallelujah ! for the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth. The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ ; and He shall reign for ever and ever, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS."

Here we have presented to us the very sublimest ideas which can rouse our hearts to triumphant gladness, the deepest and most sorrowful mysteries which can ever subdue us to saddest self-abasement. Even Music cannot reach fully to the height and depth of these ; but if it can help us in any way to realise them, it can be used in no nobler service. When left free to excite what emotions it can, it may indeed tell of many things, but of nothing better than such sublime conceptions. It is no ignoble bondage to be restrained only to the highest good. Nay, what right have we to assume that Handel's music could ever have been composed except under the inspiration of such exalted thoughts ? And so with less grand and stupendous ideas. If they are worth expressing, it is no degradation for Music to help to enforce them. There is nothing great in the idea of liberty, unless it implies liberty for good ; there is nothing mean in the idea of service, except the service of wrong. Let it be understood that Music has powers and functions which are all its own ; but let us not disdain to use it to help forward with its mighty aid the cause of definite truths, the influence of distinct moral goodness.

Carelessness about definite expression is the evil

of the Italian school of opera. Any circumstance of the drama, any sentiment of the characters, is made a pretext for the introduction of an air, or a duet, which is elaborated with the least possible regard to the ideas which it is supposed to convey. An opera is thus reduced to an opportunity of hearing a certain number of singers perform a certain quantity of music, quite independently of the dramatic subject with which it is ostensibly connected. It is against this kind of thing that Richard Wagner and his followers have entered a practical protest. Whether the so-called "Music of the Future" will ultimately make good its title to the name remains to be seen; but it cannot be denied that there is a great deal of good sense in the arguments by which its chief characteristics are upheld. It is not necessary to dive into the depths of German metaphysics, upon which the system appears to base itself. We shall probably not love Music any the better for being told that the universe "exists only so far as it has the will of existence;" that "the first manifestations of this will take place in the ideas, in Plato's sense, that is, in the archetypal forms which fashion the Cosmos, and of which the single phenomena are further subdivisions;" or that the harmonies and melodies of the musician are "as immediate and direct an objectification, or copy, of the will of the world, as the world itself is, as the ideas are of which the universe of things is the phenomenon;" they are "a representation of the cosmical will co-ordinate with the ideas themselves." Still, such doctrines, however obscure, show that their authors have taken

some pains to get to the root of the matter, and no doubt the course of the argument is perfectly clear and intelligible to themselves. But what is more likely to interest us is a much simpler doctrine which they have enunciated—viz., that when words and music are to go together, each should be suited to the other. Since Music expresses emotions, the verbal forms which seek to be conveyed by it must have in themselves “an innate want and desire for pure sentimental expression.” This leads Wagner to the rejection of ordinary subjects for “musico-poetical” expression, and the adoption of mythical and supernatural ones; but there would seem to be no sufficient reason why emotions rightly associated with the simpler and commoner facts of life should not be made the subject of some kinds of musical treatment. Only, it must be remembered that, as Wagner points out, “it is only the power of expressing distinctly the separate and individual that Music gains by its blending with worded utterance.” Thus we are led to the common-sense conclusion, that the value of this blending depends upon the conditions that the ideas verbally expressed shall be worth caring about, and that the emotions they are fitted to arouse shall be rightly, and with as much detail as possible, expressed by the music. “The free expression of intense and abundant feeling in Poetry,” says Hueffer, writing on behalf of Wagner, “is but too often encumbered by the speculative structure of language; while, on the other hand, the soaring flight of Music lacks a starting-point of strictly defined and recognisable pathos. Music and Poetry, therefore, by both their powers and

weaknesses, are referred to each other's aid, and the result of their combination will be of a higher order than is attainable by either of them in their separate state." Most persons will be disposed to acquiesce in this statement of the case. Whether Wagner's music fulfils the conditions thus laid down is another question, upon which it is not now necessary to enter.

But with regard to the art generally, we may ask, what is it which constitutes good music? Why is Beethoven better than Weber, and Weber than Sydney Smith? It is a common thing to hear a man say, "I don't pretend to care for classical music, but I am very fond of anything that is taking and pretty." This individual likes the "*Trovatore*," and its pathetic parts really affect him. Why, then, it may be asked, would it be better for him to prefer "*Fidelio*," which at present bores him unutterably? Why, when his feelings are aroused by a song of Virginia Gabriel's, should we tell him that he ought to like one of Schubert's better? Why, when he is quite satisfied with somebody or other's "*Cascade of Jewels*," should he trouble his head about a fugue of Bach's? To answer these inquiries, we must recur to our original conclusion—that Music is the language of the emotions only. Even when united with words, it does not express their *meaning*, but their sentiment; it keeps up, as it were, a concurrent play of emotion, which may and should correspond with the subjects of which they treat. The best music, then, will be that which most fully expresses the best

emotions. Now, we have seen that the absolutely bad and vicious emotions are excluded from the sphere of this art, by its reliance solely upon the beauty of so abstract a thing as Sound. A practical musician, perceiving this beauty as the object of the art, would point to it as the test of good music, and if necessary, examine it by the observed laws which govern the intervals and combinations of sound ; but this perfection of beauty is to be sought not only for its own sake, but for its fuller rejection of the lurking evil which all too soon develops itself amongst our passions.

Between emotions, however, which are in themselves sufficiently harmless, there exists great difference of value. Some are infinitely nobler and better than others ; and this does not depend so much upon kind, as upon degree ; for the same feeling is honourable in one case, and contemptible in another. Compassion is a noble emotion ; but a weak, gushing pity, which always lies upon the surface, and expends itself upon any object, however unworthy, and melts into sympathetic tears upon every occasion, however trivial, is quite undeserving of respect. The difference is that between sentiment and sentimentalism, which will be at once recognised. It is a difference of depth. And the honest gentleman, who tells you candidly that he prefers to hear his daughter perform somebody's "transcription" of such and such an air from the last comic opera to any "sonata" he ever heard, would find that if he ever came to understand Mozart or Beethoven at all, there would be no comparison between the effects produced upon him by

the two kinds of music. He is pleased and soothed by the soft passages of the drawing-room *morceau*, and fairly roused by its brilliant finale; but something very different from this would take place if he loved good music. He would find it reach down to the very depths of his being, and not merely smooth over a dull hour in the evening with mild pathos or sprightly gaiety, but raise him altogether into a purer and better region. He will never care for the one so much as he would care for the other, for it can never move him so greatly. Of course, no one can force himself to like good music, if he has no ear for its beauty, and no soul for its passion; but many persons may learn to like it better, by giving themselves up for a time to its influence, and searching patiently into its depths. They will soon discover subtle beauties, whose existence they had never suspected; and ultimately, if they have any sympathy with Music at all, they will perceive a new and wondrous world gradually dawning before them. Inferior music soon tires. It is speedily explored, and its treasures exhausted; but really fine music is always new. We hear it again and again, and each time some fresh feature discovers itself; and the emotions which it arouses are of sufficient dignity to attach themselves without difficulty to the thoughts and aims of earnest and intellectual men. Moreover, as Mr Haweis points out, a great composer conducts us through a course of feeling which progresses in a natural and healthy order, and whose development is regular, and not spasmodic.

The merit, then, of good music consists in its superior beauty, and in depth of two kinds—depth of feeling, and depth of resource.

Any one of the four qualities which were mentioned as characteristic of the art may be developed prominently, and thus give rise to a distinct order of music. Of these qualities it will be generally felt that harmony has the greatest depth. *Timbre* belongs exclusively to the performer, and though of great expressive value, is entirely fugitive. Rhythm is the most superficial characteristic, and the music which depends chiefly upon it is evidently of an inferior order. It has been well said that while such music "catches the ear with the mere beat of time," that of a higher class "subdues the heart with the sense of eternity." Melody must always be a prominent feature of good music, and the greatest masters of harmony have not neglected it. Nothing can surely be more exquisite than the instrumental recitative in the first, and the song without words in the second, movement of Beethoven's Sonata in F Major, Op. 31, No. 2. It is usual to say that Mozart was the greater master of melody; but such examples prove that it was from choice, not necessity, that Beethoven made harmony the special characteristic of his works. For however valuable melody may be, containing, as it so often does, the leading idea and motive of the whole composition, still it is in its setting, in the varied combinations under which it is presented, that the most important effects, those which lie below the surface, are to be sought. It is this which causes the superiority of the German over the Italian school.

The latter is bright, beautiful, pathetic; but the great masters of Germany have found the key to unlock the hidden chambers and far recesses of the hearts of men, and it is a golden key, which never grows rusty. The music of the nations bears the impress of national character; and the warm, imaginative temperament of one, the profound thought and far-reaching speculation of another, find various expression in various poetry of Sound.

The statement that the merit of good music consists in its depth is almost a truism, when the nature of the art is considered; but it is none the less necessary to insist upon it. The common enemy of greatness in all the arts, the idea, namely, that they are mere playthings, amusements which are in a moral point of view quite colourless, operates here with very evil effect. This principle says, "Amuse yourselves, and take no trouble to cultivate higher tastes. If the music pleases you, why not be content with it?"—the result of which is, that music is composed and performed down to the very lowest level of popular taste, mere noise and flourish being substituted for real excellence. It may be questioned, too, whether any good is effected by popular concerts, which profess to give first-rate music, but take care to surround it with attractive trash, just as the nurse conceals the powder in a spoonful of jam. The Promenade Concerts at Covent Garden are usually of this type. For example, a so-called "classical night," in 1873, presented, in the first part, some features of merit. The orchestra was fairly good; and its faults, notably a total absence of delicacy in

the lights and shades of the music, were such as were inseparable from the conditions of the performance. A fresh conductor nightly, and an audience which walks about and talks aloud are not exactly elements of success in the rendering of Mozart or Handel. Such effects, however, as might have been produced were soon neutralised by the intense silliness of the second part. One must draw the line somewhere, and it hardly displays too much exclusiveness to draw it at Jullien's "British Army Quadrilles." There are not only chords of patriotism in the human breast, which it may be well to strike occasionally, but there are also nerves in the human head which should be respected. The chief efforts of M. Rivière, with his "Full Orchestra and five Military Bands," seemed to be directed to blowing off the roof of the theatre. It was an insult to the audience to produce this ear-splitting noise and call it music. Nevertheless, *the audience applauded*. The whole thing was almost too childish for detailed criticism. The bands parading the corridors, suggesting, as a gentleman in the promenade was heard to remark, that the music was "laid on with the gas"—the "galloping of the horses," imitated by beating a number of wooden clubs or mallets on the floor; the "approach of night," when the gas was turned down in the theatre; the "break of day," when it was turned up again; the falling in of the various regiments, represented by the emergence of half-a-dozen members of each of the military bands from a trap-door in the midst of the orchestra; the interesting efforts of Mr Levy, in apparently practising some scales on

the cornet-à-pistons; the conclusion, when "the Battle raged with Fury," as stated by the programme in large capitals, and when everybody in the orchestra blew, scraped, or shouted, with all available force of arms or lungs, and a number of explosives were detonated below the stage—that this should not only be tolerated, but even loudly applauded, did not augur well for the prospects of musical art amongst us. The only way to foster a better taste amongst the people, is to give them music which is thoroughly good, but at the same time melodious. An abstruse work will be but "caviare to the general," but there is plenty of excellent music by the great composers, which is sufficiently tuneful to attract an average middle-class audience, but which has also sufficient depth to be intrinsically worthy of attention, and to be at the same time likely to produce a desire for other and more profound researches into musical art.

Music is undoubtedly the purest of all the arts; all the others are liable to the intrusion of some prosaic elements. Verbal Poetry may become mere verse; Painting, Sculpture, and Acting degenerate into servile imitation; Architecture may fall to the level of building; Dancing may be degraded into posturing. Music, alone, presents always the characteristics of pure Poetry. Its *raison d'être* is the Beautiful, and it does not exist until the artist's mind has created it. It is thus the simplest possible embodiment of the Imagination. Nor is it the purest of the arts in this sense only. Evil flies before it now, as the malign spirit departed from Saul when David played upon his harp. There seems to be absolutely

no moral taint which is capable of attaching itself to Music. It is with difficulty that it associates itself even for a time with evil surroundings; and when it is dragged into the service of dissipation and sensuality, it contracts no stain. However unsavoury may be the *libretto* of an opera, its music can be guilty of no prurient suggestiveness. However gloomy and morbid a man's mind may become, Music can supply no fuel for his melancholy. It may be light, trivial, even foolish, but it can never be directly harmful.

It is well that that which is thus the best and purest of our æsthetic pleasures is also the one which moves us most deeply; and we should do wisely to cultivate it even more than we do. We are far too cold and calculating at the present day. We seem afraid to let people think that we care in our hearts for anything. Music will at least help us to *feel*. We sorely need the aid of some influence on the side of enthusiasm, of earnestness in work, and sincerity of pleasure; something which will tend to break down the make-believes of social pastime, and the cant of conventional service. More than anything in the world, Music will help us to realise the capacity for emotion within us: it is no mere toy, it is the expression of a part of our nature as important as those reasoning faculties which alone the modern creed adores. The Puritans, who think it unfit to be a prominent feature in religious worship, either do not care for it nor understand its powers and functions; or they are not willing to consecrate all—even their æsthetic and intellectual part—to the service of God. Certainly to those who truly love it, Music is no light and trivial thing. It is

almost *too* beautiful ; and sometimes the sense of its perfectness is accompanied by a consciousness of our inability to grasp it which is almost a pain. Mr Baring-Gould has used this very beautifully as an argument for the immortality of the soul. Music seems to tell of something altogether above us and beyond us, and the thoughts which are born of it lie indeed far too deep for tears. Surely we shall understand it better some day :—

- “ In vain, with dull and tuneless ear,
I linger by soft Music's cell,
And in my heart of hearts would hear
What to her own she deigns to tell.
- “ 'Tis misty all, both sight and sound—
I only know 'tis fair and sweet—
'Tis wandering on enchanted ground
With dizzy brow and tottering feet.
- “ But patience ! there may come a time
When these dull ears shall scan aright
Strains, that outring Earth's drowsy chime
As Heaven outshines the taper's light.” *

The doctrine of the resurrection of the body teaches us that Heaven is no mere cold abstraction, no mere intellectual satisfaction, no mere contact with an Infinity which our present finite being cannot understand. It is all this ; but it is also a region of love and eager delight, and perfect physical as well as mental happiness. We know not what the spiritual body will be like, but we know that amongst its other pleasures it will be sensitive to Music—Music, no longer

- “ Burdened with a grand majestic secret
That keeps sweeping from us evermore ”—

* The Christian Year.

then our hearts will be rightly tuned to its concords, and our souls lifted to the height of its purity. Then the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped, and the tongue of the dumb sing. Then no more shall sin choke the outpouring of thankful love, nor sorrow intercept the utterance of praise; but when joy and faith and hope attain their ultimate fulfilment, then shall Music reach its highest perfection too, and the courts of Heaven shall re-echo to the sound of harpers, and the voices of the redeemed singing their new song in wondrous harmony around the crystal sea.

CHAPTER II.

ARCHITECTURE.

As a rule, the Fine Arts are in their nature unconnected with material uses, and touch rather the moral and intellectual departments of life. We may, indeed, apply them to those objects which minister to the necessities and conveniences of our existence, but these can be supplied without their aid; and if all the pictures and statues in the world were destroyed tomorrow, our mere bodily comfort would not be interfered with.

With regard to one of the arts, however, the case is different. Amongst the earliest necessities of the human race is that of shelter; and amongst the most imperative requirements of an advanced civilisation are convenient apartments for the transaction of the various duties and employments of domestic and public life. As soon as elements of permanence entered into the conditions of society, buildings began to be erected; at first, perhaps, only for occasional resort, or for storage, or for purposes of defence, but gradually for all the uses of habitations, temples, and places of business. Upon this most necessary mechanical art of building, the Fine Art of Archi-

ture is founded ; and the first step to the understanding of the subject is to ascertain the nature of the distinction between the two. For it is very evident that building, with all its complications and elaborate appliances, may exist without presenting any feature which would make it worthy of a place amongst the forms of Poetry ; and whilst we must recognise the fact that mere "building" passes into "Architecture" by almost imperceptible degrees, yet, unless we wish to involve ourselves in the old puzzle about the point at which a small heap becomes a big one, or a calf becomes a heifer, we must make up our minds as to the characteristics which separate the one from the other.

Mr Ruskin in "The Seven Lamps of Architecture" proposes to "confine the name" (of Architecture) "to that art which, taking up and admitting as conditions of its working the necessities and common uses of the building, impresses on its form certain characters, venerable or beautiful, but otherwise unnecessary." "Thus," he says, "I suppose no one would call the laws architectural which determine the height of a breastwork, or the position of a bastion. But if to the stone-facing of the bastion be added an unnecessary feature, as a cable-moulding, *that* is Architecture." In the same way, he suggests that battlements or machicolations cannot be called architectural features, "so long as they consist only of an advanced gallery, supported on projecting masses, with open intervals beneath for offence. But if these projecting masses be carved beneath into rounded courses, which are useless, and if the headings of the

intervals be arched and trefoiled, which is useless, *that is Architecture.*" So he concludes that the art "concerns itself only with those characters of an edifice which are above and beyond its common uses." A natural development of this view of the subject leads him elsewhere to define Architecture as "the art of designing sculpture for a particular place, and placing it there on the best principles of building." These definitions, however, tend to obscure a fundamental characteristic of the art, which we shall find of the greatest value in examining its functions. It is not enough to say that Architecture admits the necessities and material uses of the structure as conditions of its working, they are more than this, they are *the reason and the end of its working*. The architect does not merely avail himself of the production of the builder as an opportunity for the display of his own abilities as a decorator; he does not merely seek to overlay necessary features with unnecessary ones; he so directs the building that the necessary features shall themselves be beautiful and impressive.

Stand, for instance, within the west door of Westminster Abbey, and look around. Where are the unnecessary features of the building? None of the columns can be spared; each arch of the nave, each rib of the vaulting, has its work to do; but these are the very things which supply the element of Beauty. Although, therefore, Architecture may often employ accessories which are, in a material sense, useless, it may retain its character as a Fine Art without them. It is obvious that a large edifice might have been

erected for the purposes of Westminster Abbey in quite a different way. As far as mere shelter and convenience are concerned, something in the usual style of a barrack or a cotton-mill would have sufficed. The difference is not between building with something else added to it, and building by itself, but between two different modes and motives of building. The cotton-mill is built with a view of supplying the required accommodation with the least possible trouble and expense; the church is built so that the structure itself may be a source of pleasure, and that its duty may be fulfilled, not only effectually, but delightfully also.

It appears, further, that Sculpture, properly so called, is no indispensable part of Architecture. All real beauty and sublimity in Art must correspond with Nature; and therefore all the features even of Architecture, which are truly grand or lovely, may in one sense be called imitative. The foliations of window-tracery and the arching of a Gothic roof have their counterparts in the leaves of plants and the interlacing boughs of forest trees. But the difference between sculptural and architectural form is this, that the one consists of a direct transcript—more or less exact—of the appearances of natural objects, whilst the other is entirely abstracted from these objects, and treated without reference to them. It is, indeed, quite a mistake to suppose that in their origin such architectural forms were imitated from Nature. They were designed as being beautiful and suitable to the purposes for which they were required; but the taste of those who suggested them may be tested by their

correspondence with natural types. The value and importance of Sculpture, as applied to Architecture by way of ornament, will be spoken of presently ; but even in this application, the effect of the building, and the value of its parts considered as architectural features, will be found to depend upon the direction and combination of its bounding lines, and the relative disposition of its lights and shadows, rather than upon the completeness with which its imitative details are elaborated ; and it is needful at this point to state as clearly as possible the fact that Architecture in itself is independent of the direct representation of natural objects. We must all allow that there is a beauty in an arched window or a vaulted roof, and an impressiveness in the loftiness of a cathedral choir, altogether apart from the sculpture with which each may be embellished. If we look again at the nave of Westminster Abbey, we shall find that the aid of Sculpture is not in any way required. The capitals of the columns are merely embellished with plain mouldings ; and, in fact, the only sculpture to be seen is upon the bosses of the roof, which are too far from the eye for the details to be perceived. In the same way, no one would think of ascribing the effect of the dome of S. Paul's to anything which could by the widest stretch of language be called Sculpture. And in a multitude of cases where ornament is more largely employed, the forms are rather abstract than imitative ; as, for instance, in the case of the Norman zigzag and billet mouldings which produce so rich an appearance. So, also, the most highly decorated examples of Tudor architecture owe their effect to

purely architectural forms; roofs and walls being alike covered with a succession of small cusped arches.

In one of his later works,* Mr Ruskin insists that Sculpture itself "is essentially the production of a pleasant bossiness, or roundness of surface,"—which pleasantness "is irrespective of imitation on the one side, and of structure on the other." If this account of the latter art be accepted, we may, of course, allow that Architecture is in its nature sculptural. Undoubtedly this "pleasant bossiness" is largely involved in both arts, but it will be generally felt that there is a difference between the nature of their subjects which is a fundamental one, and cannot be thus readily bridged over. Let us, at any rate, recognise this clearly; that Architecture, in its essence, depends upon nothing more than this pleasant variety of surface, whether Sculpture does so or not. Imitation of natural forms may occur in it, but, as a rule, only by way of added ornament. Eastern architects have been known to construct windows whose tracery is directly imitated from a growing tree, but such instances may safely be regarded as the exceptions which prove the rule; and we may take it that Mr Armstead is not necessarily to be considered an architect, because he has filled some of the spandrels in front of the new Government Offices with sculpture; and that Sir Gilbert Scott is not to be looked upon as a sculptor, because his fellow-artist's work has been thus incorporated with his own.

Architecture, then, is concerned with Inanimate Form applied to certain uses. But whilst insisting

* *Aratra Pentelici*.

strongly upon this view of its essential characteristics, we must not fail to recognise that in practice it frequently attracts to itself both Sculpture and Painting (the latter in the sense, at least, of the disposition of colour). It is necessary to understand these clearly to be independent arts, but Architecture uses them for the fulfilment of its own purposes. It is "the poetry of Inanimate Form," as distinct from other kinds of poetry, but it is very often associated with these other kinds. In fact, when we look into its various phases and features, we find that it occupies only one department of the very large sphere of what is generally called "applied Art,"—which we may express in another way as "the poetry of Service." The difference between building and Architecture, is precisely the same as the difference between a common beer-glass and a Venetian beaker, between a cottage stool and a carved oak chair, between a charity-school gown and an elegant dress from Worth's. In each case, the same work—of holding a beverage, affording rest, or supplying warmth and covering—has to be done ; but one thing merely does it, the other does it pleasantly. And whether we regard Architecture in its own necessary elements only, or take it to include a number of associated arts in certain applications, we shall find this idea of poetical service the key to its right appreciation ; and we may with advantage embrace in our present investigation, not merely the conditions of the beauty of abstract form in service, but also the functions of imitative Sculpture and of colour, when they occur as ornamental features of a building.

Now, if the views above expressed are correct, it will follow that the first and most important question to be asked about any example of applied Art is—Does it do its work efficiently? We live in a "work-a-day world." There is room in it (though not much room) for luxuries and fineries as such; but we are now considering articles for *use*, and we have none of us so much superfluous time and ability that we can afford to employ invalid ones. It is no merit in a carpet to be so delicate that one is afraid to walk across the room for fear of soiling it. A coal-box of such an elegant shape that one can't get the coals out of it is a mere nuisance. A chair which is so elaborately carved that it hurts one's back to sit in it is only fit for a museum, and ought not, properly speaking, to be called a chair at all; it is a piece of woodwork. In the same way, a building which is in any way inconvenient is a bad building, however decorated; a window which does not give due light to the interior is a bad window, whatever tracery it may be filled with; a door which is not large enough for the number of persons who require to pass through it is a bad door, no matter by what laws of proportion its dimensions have been calculated. The rule is a universal one, that a thing which does its duty, even though it does it sulkily and disagreeably, is better than a thing which does not do it at all, however agreeable the latter may be from other points of view.

It is one of the worst meannesses of the present day that the plain requirements of solidity and strength and mere ordinary durability are neglected

in our houses, whilst the pretentious stucco porch and dangerous iron balcony occupy the time of the builder. The walls are carefully "pointed," but they are so carelessly built in the first instance that a mere kick would knock them down. Indeed, houses are often put together so flimsily that the only wonder is that they do not collapse altogether, like a house of cards, and fall in meagre ruin. Until this state of things is heartily and actively condemned, as well as the temper which sees harm in it only when its consequences are inconvenient, there is no use in talking about Architecture. The right spirit for an architect is, not to get the work done anyhow, and then to play with its decoration; but to work honestly and well, and to take a pride in working. Accordingly, even supposing that the required task is thoroughly done, it is better that it should be done frankly; that its fulfilment should be evident to the eye, and this without pretence or trickery. Thus, when any weight is to be supported upon columns, these should be manifestly strong enough to bear it; when piers or columns are introduced to strengthen a wall and help it to carry the weight of the roof, their purpose should be avowed, and no artifice used to make us believe that they are merely employed to support urns or other decorative features; as, for example, in the Whitehall Club in Parliament Street. When apertures are required, they should be duly arched, or else the mode in which the superstructure is supported should be clearly shown, the beam or other material used being frankly displayed. The flat tops of the windows in our semi-detached houses

not only look unsafe, but it is the commonest thing for them to give way actually. On the other hand, it is of no use to display arches where they have nothing particular to do, as in the house, No. 48, Cheapside, whose big arch merely gets in the way of the upper windows, and which, where some support is really needed, viz., over the shop front, has the arch broken down into a straight line. In a multitude of cases the security of a building is made to depend upon sheer strength of materials, and in the majority this has to be taken for granted. It is surely better when the mode of construction is rendered apparent, and when this is seen at once to be satisfactory. It has been often remarked that Classical architecture is, in this respect at least, inferior to Gothic. It is evident that columns must be placed comparatively close together when flat stones are to be laid upon them, and this is costly and inconvenient. As for apertures, modern Renaissance architects generally cut their windows out in rectangles, and put heavy triangular pediments upon the top: a method which can hardly be said to suggest, at first sight, security of construction. In the Norman and Early Gothic and Romanesque schools of Architecture, every member of the building (speaking generally) has its assigned work to do, and does it efficiently, obviously, and without ostentation. Instead of ponderous masses resting their dead weight upon rows of columns, arches are used, which partly distribute the weight in the form of lateral thrust, and are at once the safest modes of support (as depending least upon the strength of their materials),

and, in the form of vaulting, the best adapted for covering wide spaces. Yet the principle of columnar support is carried out in all details. In the finer developments of Gothic work, each moulding of the arches is thus separately cared for; and even the delicate tracery of the windows is often sustained by mullions which take the form of slender pillars, each with its base and capital, while every rib of the roof is connected with a vaulting-shaft.

Our principle will at least serve to condemn all tricks and deceits of structure: all stucco, all deceptive veneer, all shams of any kind. Falsehoods are common enough in every department of applied Art, and their moral evil is not half sufficiently recognised. The mean vanity which likes to appear to use a costly thing, and from either poverty or parsimony substitutes a sham, deserves something more than passive repudiation. Nothing can be more thoroughly snobbish and despicable than to have a dining-room table made with massive mahogany legs, but with a deal top, which is, of course, carefully covered with a cloth. It is distinctly telling a lie. Simplicity is rapidly dying out from amongst the virtues of the present day, if one may judge by the fripperies with which it is thought necessary to bedizen our daily surroundings. Clothes and carpets, as well as houses, are not made for wear but for show; and the great anxiety is not to procure good articles but pretentious ones. Let us do what we can to remedy this. Let us take care that, as far as possible, all that we use shall be good of its kind, rather than a mean mockery of a more costly kind.

If we cannot afford a fur garment, let us wear no imitation of it; if we cannot afford a silver sugar-basin, let us use a glass one; if we cannot afford stone mouldings upon our houses, let us have the plain bricks, but no stucco.

We must, however, allow that an architect is not bound to display his method of construction, provided that he makes no false assertion respecting it. If any unperceived difficulty exists, which necessitates peculiar measures for the overcoming of it, he is not obliged to tell us of either the one or the other. No more stringent rules need be laid down than these: that all materials shall be what they seem to be; and that every part of a building which is naturally understood to do certain work shall in fact do it.

It is, however, a nice question how far the use of iron may be permitted in Architecture. It would certainly seem to be inadmissible in buildings of stone, and the like, at least when concealed; for the stone-work is generally assumed to supply all the required strength and support, and a deception is practised if an iron girder is introduced within the structure. On the other hand, cases may occur where the real conditions are not likely to be generally known; and it is not easy to decide in such a case whether the architect is not justified in using any aids he may find convenient.

But there would appear to be no reason to reject the services of iron in Architecture, when openly and avowedly rendered. Mr Ruskin, indeed, refuses to consider iron-work as Architecture at all, on the ground

that in the earlier forms of the art (which have since become associated with its laws) the use of iron was unknown ; and that the ideas which are habitual to us with regard to proportion, construction, &c., are founded upon a presupposition of such materials as clay, wood, or stone. He especially reviles the Crystal Palace, chiefly alleging against it that it is " destitute of every kind of sculpture, except the bosses produced by the heads of nails and rivets ;" and that " those who traverse it are continually in danger of falling over the cross-bars that bind it together." Without discussing the merits of the particular building referred to, it may be urged in reply that the conditions of iron - structure are now very generally recognised, and that no one would expect the Crystal Palace to present the same features of proportion as a building of brick or stone, and that it is unreasonable to quarrel with iron-work because it uses cross-bars which are not required in the case of different materials. Of course, if we are to hold that no Architecture is worthy of the name which does not involve Sculpture, we must acquiesce in Mr Ruskin's sweeping denunciation of the use of iron ; but the question is whether, apart from any preconceived theory, a building like the conservatory at Chatsworth, or the South Court of the South Kensington Museum, has not a certain definite grace of its own ; and whether, in its lightness and delicacy, it is not entitled to a place in the poetry of Service, and that none the less because it is not comparable with work of another kind. Most persons will be disposed to agree that such buildings may be marked by a

beauty of no ignoble kind, and will continue to delight in them, although they will still contradict many laws which are conceivably applicable to buildings of brick or stone.

Structure, then, is the fundamental idea of Architecture. But if the art is to rise above a mere mechanical level, this structure must become beautiful, and be rendered imaginative. The theory that ornamentation is merely decorated structure is denounced by the writer just referred to as altogether false; but it must be borne in mind that when it is asserted that structure should be decorated, it is not necessarily implied that *all* the decoration of a building must be dependant on its mechanical characteristics. A wall may be adorned with paintings or mosaics which are altogether independent of its strength or modes of support. Certain conditions of position and permanence, and certain associations with the purpose and character of the building should have their influence upon the designs, but this is all. Even so, however, the wall has got its work to do, and although the decorations may be wholly unconnected with its structural uses, yet they affect the question whether its task is done pleasantly as well as thoroughly. But the greater part of the decoration incidental to a building is not thus independent of its mechanical design. If a flat block of stone is required in a particular position, it is, indeed, possible that its surface may be sculptured in any way without affecting its functions. But if the floral embellishment of a capital be treated without a due regard to its uses, those uses

will appear to be interfered with, and the art will suffer accordingly. The rule may be suggested that, so far as sculpture or painting is truly architectural, it must be connected with external structure (not necessarily, of course, with the anatomy or internal structure of the building); and that so far as it is not so connected, it belongs to a different art, and has no more to do with Architecture proper than a *ballet-divertissement*, introduced into the midst of an opera, has to do with the action of the dramatic part of the performance.

Beauty and grandeur in Architecture may be manifested, as we have seen, in the perfection of its purely architectural forms. Thus, the pointed arch is superior to the round for general use, because it is capable of infinite and exquisitely beautiful variations of form, and, by the use of cusps, may be made to furnish a still greater number of lovely lines. So, if we compare the crypt of S. Paul's with that of Glasgow Cathedral, we shall see at once how much difference there may be in the disposition of the lines of a roof; how far the clustering ribs of the northern vault exceed in beauty the chill barrenness of the southern mausoleum. And so with other features of Architecture, which it is not necessary for our present purpose to discuss.

Further, the beauty of a building is affected by the relation of its parts to one another, *i.e.*, by its proportion. This is a very subtle thing, and needs much study and good taste for its full appreciation. In this place it will suffice to notice it as an important element in the æsthetic value of complex form, and

an element which affects us all in some degree, though its refinements are not generally understood.*

Again, the impressiveness of Architecture is to a very great extent dependent upon the arrangement of light and shade. All Art which is related to form of three dimensions is largely concerned with these. Both in mass and in detail, the effect of a building is due not only to its lines, but also to the arrangement of the shadows which throw those lines into prominence. The beauty of sculptural form can, of course, be only felt through the sudden gloom of its direct incisions, and the delicate shading of its rounded surfaces. Nor is the element of shadow less to be regarded with respect to the disposition of the larger component features of a building. The magnificent front of the British Museum depends for its grandeur upon the solemn gloom beneath its columns, quite as much as upon the stately proportions of the columns themselves.

Finally, architectural beauty relies, in a very important degree, upon the ornamentation of structure, which may, as we have seen, take the form of either colouring or sculpture. Upon the former it is not purposed to enlarge here, as the æsthetic

* A discussion of the conditions of excellence in tracery, mouldings, and the like, or in the matter of proportion and the relation of parts, would involve us in questions which would be out of place here. One point, however, much insisted on by Mr Ruskin, may be just noticed. It is, that tracery originally resulted from the form of the *lights* being designed as if *cut out*, and not from the mullions, &c., being *built up*. A forgetfulness of this has given rise to various kinds of tracery in which the nature of the stone is ignored, it being made to look as if twisted and bent into the required shape.

functions of colour will have to be considered fully hereafter. It is only necessary now to observe that, with regard to this kind of decoration, a building should be considered as already a complete and *solid* thing, so that it is not necessary to regard the marking of distances or contours in the arrangement of the colour. These will be marked by the natural perspective, and light and shadow of the structure. The individual qualities and mutual harmonies of colours are principally to be considered in connection with this art. With Sculpture the question of subordination stands somewhat differently. Architecture is essentially concerned with form, and Sculpture is nothing but the representation of certain kinds of form. The treatment of beautiful abstracted form passes so readily into direct and complete imitation in details, that a system of imitative sculptural ornamentation is the most natural, as well as the most interesting, that could be devised.

Now, in considering the characteristics of the various elements of grandeur and beauty in Architecture, it must be remembered that it is essential to Imaginative Art that it should be original. However excellent a work may be, its reproduction is rather a mechanical than an intellectual process. It may involve appreciation, indeed, but cannot, in any way, demand creative mental power. Without for a moment denying that a copy may be a very good thing, we may safely assert that (intellectually, at least) the original is a better. And of styles of Architecture, that which gives the greatest freedom to the individual worker will be the most suited to

the production of poetical results. Herein (as in the case of the other arts) lies the principal demerit of the Classical schools. Except in the matter of the arrangement of parts, and consequently to some extent of proportion, the Classical architect is hedged round on all sides by precedents, and is never allowed to think or feel for himself. This is not merely in the constructive part of buildings. The same mechanical work has, of course, to be done again and again in different structures, and must often be done in the same way. Even, however, in these commonly recurring features of Architecture, the Gothic schools have the advantage. The straight lines, oblongs, &c., which occur in the majority of Classical and Renaissance works, contain no elements of variety. The arch, when any is used, is always round, and therefore always the same; whereas pointed arches may be narrow and sharp, or broad, or ogee, and different kinds may be combined, as in the Ladye Chapel of Salisbury Cathedral. So with the great feature of Classical architecture, the portico. Grand as the arrangement undoubtedly is, one cannot but feel that its reproduction in modern buildings is attended with a sameness which is at least a defect. Even such a building as S. George's Hall at Liverpool owes its impressiveness less to the thought of its own architect than to that of the Greeks. And this subservience to former systems is commonly accounted rather a merit than otherwise. It is very different with the Gothic architect; he is expected to think for himself. Although, of course, he must often follow some previous type, his manner of

working it out is expected to be his own. When we come to details of ornamentation, the contrast between the two schools is more apparent still. The Classical architect is allowed to have no tastes of his own. Is his building of the Corinthian order?—he is obliged to like acanthus-leaves for his capitals, whether he will or no. This might not be so bad, but that he is not allowed to like anything else; at least, to one or other of the five orders he is compelled to resort. He goes a dreary round of "triglyphs" and "raindrop ornaments," "egg-and-dart mouldings" and Ionic volutes, "dentils," "Greek fret," and acanthus-leaves.

In contrast to this cut-and-dried work, the Gothic schools (including the early Romanesque) not only allow, but expect and require, originality in the treatment of ornamentation. They take their ornaments from Nature, and they find no copyism in her. Laws they find, and restraint, but no repetition. Pluck any two sprays from a tree, and you will find them different: they may be similar in size, in the number of the leaves, in general conformation,—but they will not be alike. And with this universal condition of variety ever present before him in Nature, and with her inexhaustible treasures of beauty ready to his hand, the true architectural sculptor no more desires to confine himself to the continued reproduction of conventionalities than he wishes that the wood-birds would sing in unison, or that the stars of heaven were arranged symmetrically.

An accessible example may be given in the cast of the oaken choir-stalls of Ulm Cathedral, in the

South Kensington Museum.* Observe how the artist's fancy plays around every detail of the work. The dwarf columns and their capitals, the knobs on the arms of the stalls, and the quaint grotesques on the "miserere" seats are all different. And although in the purely architectural details of the canopy above the artist has sacrificed somewhat of dignity to elaboration, yet such a work is surely better than the thoughtless, pleasureless, unintelligent productions of the so-called Renaissance schools. We may take, as another instance, a recent building, the "Congregational Memorial Hall and Library" in Farringdon Street, whose ornamentation has evidently been taken direct from Nature, and is therefore, as a matter of course, varied throughout. With all its faults, at least it is not stale. Ferns and oak, passion-flower and ivy—individual thought, individual energy, individual faith and love—are displayed upon capital and moulding. It might conceivably be a question whether imitative ornament should be permitted in architectural details at all; but if we are to have it, let us at least have it fresh, and not acquiesce in a tacit assertion that a few ancient conventional types embody the only kinds of excellence in the world, and that "triglyphs" and "paterae" are more worth sculpturing than the lilies of the field, and the waving branches of the forest.†

* An excellent example in modern work may be seen in the new choir stalls of Exeter Cathedral.

† It is not, of course, meant that a scheme of decoration involving direct copying from Nature is indispensable. The architect may confine himself to purely architectural forms. The source of beauty may be in the forms of arches and the like; the capitals may have plain

But this reference to Nature serves to remind us that it is not enough for ornament to be free, it must also be beautiful; that is to say, it must be really *ornament*. Freedom is always apt to degenerate into licence, and this is worse than servitude. We must distinguish here between what is the natural and inevitable outcome of exuberant feelings, and the spasmodic effort of a jaded or listless mind. When workmen are left to themselves, to furnish what they like in the way of sculptured decoration, they very frequently produce grotesques. The innate desire to relieve the serious part of work with something laughable—the longing, even, to get rid of evil thoughts by caricaturing them—cannot be ignored. As long as there is evidence that a workman sculpts grotesques because he really cares about them; as long as such sculpture is truly a *relief* to the man, and is not allowed to grow into the habitual expression of delight in ugliness and deformity, there will always be some elements of nobleness in it; and even if we cannot

mouldings, and so forth. Or if he goes beyond this, he may employ a system of abstract imitation; and, indeed, it will be seen when we come to speak of other forms of applied Art that abstraction is, in itself, not only unobjectionable, but, under some conditions, essentially necessary. By abstraction is meant the partial or conventional rendering of a thing: the presentation of a type, rather than a direct copy, of a natural object. This is often desirable, and especially it is required whenever the ornament is to be repeated, or when the ornament has work to do, as in the case of a gargoyle. Corinthian acanthus-leaves, and Early-English "dog-tooth mouldings," are right and beautiful in their way, and indeed only such conventional forms could be rightly repeated at all. Still they are not the only modes of decorating a building; and though it is sometimes possible to recur with advantage to a former type, *freedom of choice* is essential. Also it is necessary that the abstraction should be drawn from, and inspired by, natural objects.

take pleasure in it ourselves, we may well pardon it for the sake of others. Such excuses, however, will not in any way apply to that species of ornamentation which is all too common at the present day; and which, while intended to please, is ugly, and, without any symptom of comicality, is absurd. It is very easy, for any one who cares to take the trouble, to distinguish between foolish work and necessary play; and the utmost liberty does not mean licence to stick faces upon Composite columns, or to form the keystone of an arch with a kind of glorified bracket growing out of a head, or to decorate walls with other heads whose long flowing beards consist of a heterogeneous medley of fruits and flowers—all of which may be seen and studied at Stationers' Hall Buildings, Ludgate Hill. A little common sense will go far to help us to distinguish between what is true ornament, and what is only the pretence of it. It is an unfortunate fact that modern Renaissance ornament, when it is free, is generally silly. The depth to which that which is really intended for decoration may fall is shown by the monument to Archbishop Law (A.D. 1632) in Glasgow Cathedral; which, as Lord Macaulay would say, we take to be, on the whole, the worst monument in the world. It is difficult to describe this culmination of hideousness. It is of stone, and presents, amongst other features, two nondescript pilasters, larger at the top than at the bottom, each supporting a head (which might have been designed in Ashantee, or some such artistic locality). Behind these are other nondescript erections, terminating in pyramids. In the

centre, over the inscription, is a pediment, embellished by egg-and-dart mouldings, and supported by pillars; underneath it is a contrivance which appears to have been originally intended for a species of jug, but which has been shaved off at the neck into a kind of scroll. It has not come to sufficient maturity to have a handle. At the top of all is a thing which looks as if it had originally formed part of a large fretwork puzzle, and similar pieces are stuck here and there about the structure. Finally, as the most suitable ornaments for the tomb of a Christian prelate, are added a winged hourglass, and a skull and cross-bones.

Probably it would be impossible to match this tomb for badness, but the spirit which produced it is common enough. The house, No. 111, Victoria Street, Westminster, affords a good example of the style in question, it being overlaid with all sorts of nondescript scrolls and patches: and a strong family likeness to this kind of decoration may be traced in the curly projections on the western towers, which, thanks to Sir Christopher Wren, disfigure Westminster Abbey.

Further, the use of urns, trumpets, armour, and the like, for sculptured decoration, is opposed to the first principles of æsthetic excellence. Man's workmanship, at its best, is inferior to that of the world around him; and an imitation of it is but the shadow of a shade. No great work was ever yet produced by the vanity and self-assertion of which such copying of his own performances is an evidence. Nor is it enough that the subjects of decoration should be

connected with the works of Nature, unless they are earnestly and thoughtfully treated. A favourite device in Renaissance ornamentation consists of one or more cherubic winged heads. These are usually fixed up over windows or doors, or upon tombstones. Now, the human form is the noblest work of Nature, and therefore the grandest subject for æsthetic treatment. And although the incongruity of the usual association of wings and heads, and the painful absurdity of the positions commonly assigned to them, will be felt by most people, yet a human face, if carefully represented, would seem, at first, to be a not altogether unworthy subject of Art, however surrounded, and wherever placed. How, then, does the Renaissance sculptor treat it?

It being one of the principles of the Classical schools to place ornament as high up as possible, where it can with least readiness be seen, it is not always easy to form an accurate judgment upon the quality of the work. However, at the church called S. Mary, Woolnoth, there is a specimen of cherubic sculpture over a door in the basement, which can be examined closely. It consists of a group of three heads, and the first thing which will strike the spectator is the aged and vicious expression of the one on the left, in spite of its chubby cheeks. But childish innocence is not the only thing wanting, for a further inspection will reveal the astonishing fact that *not one of the heads has got any ears*. It is only fair to state that there is in one case a faint indication of an intention on the part of the artist to begin such an appendage, but he apparently gave it up as superfluous. Also

that in another instance, the place where the ear ought to be is covered by a sort of half-woolly, half-horny process, which we take to be meant for hair. In the case of the uppermost of the three heads, the artist seems to have become perplexed as to where the wings ought to spring from, and to have mixed them up in some way with the ears.* Making, however, every possible allowance for the confusion of mind naturally incidental to the attempt to realise cherubs, it is impossible to recognise in such sculpture that appreciation of natural grace and dignity which is the first requisite for any artistic merit whatever. It is only from a man who does his work thoroughly, as well as affectionately, that we may hope for decoration worthy of our esteem. It is not meant that complete realisation is necessary to excellence. On the contrary, the conditions of architectural Sculpture render abstraction often desirable. But however the artist may subordinate some characteristics of his subject to others, we may at least require that what he does give us shall be true as far as it goes, and shall express some, if not all, of the real spirit and life of the thing represented, whether it be leaf, or flower, or animal. We may only require a sketch, but we must never condone a careless misrepresentation. The sculptor may claim the right to stay his hand when he chooses, but he has no right to offer us the blundering results of blunted feeling.

* There is a similar sculpture over a corresponding door on the opposite side of the church, which, though about equally bad, shows that the artist was not ignorant of the usual occurrence of ears upon heads.

If a building is decorated with sculpture which has been rightly thought about, and heartily executed, whether it be in the form of bas-reliefs and figure-subjects, or of simple floral embellishment, then it offers not one, but a multitude of sources of pleasure. The Gothic mode of Architecture has been reproached with a want of majesty and repose, with an attention to details which interferes with dignity of mass. Without for a moment admitting the accusation to be a just one, it may be replied that in any style of Architecture, few buildings only can be expected to rise to the Sublime, but all, however small or unimportant, may, if their architects choose, be made worthy of our affection. Delicate fancies and graceful forms, playful grotesques and solemn thoughts,—these may be displayed in them, these we can understand, and these we shall delight to contemplate. And even if the building be not gorgeous enough to excite the admiration of the thoughtless, nor big enough to arouse the wonder of the ignorant, those who live in it, work in it, worship in it, will learn to love it; and will trace the teachings of its stones from day to day, till some fair fancy will sparkle on its every point of light, and some sweet remembrance nestle in every quiet shadow which lies upon its walls.

Decoration may, of course, be overdone. An architect's work cannot be too beautiful, but there is such a thing as gaudiness—a fact which in the pursuit of ornamental trivialities is sometimes lost sight of. This result of an ignoble striving after effect is so common and obvious a danger in all free

Art, that many of the errors of the Classical schools may be traced to a too great desire to escape it. On the one hand, there is a risk of the artist being carried away into absurdities; on the other, the loss which must occur when, in his anxiety to avoid excess, he deprives himself of legitimate sources of pleasure. At the South Kensington Museum there is a cast of a doorway of the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostella, in Spain. This is an instance of subordination of Architecture to Sculpture, and apart from the manner in which the details are executed (of which it is not easy to judge from a cast), one feels at once that the sculpture is carried too far. The capitals have a rich effect, but when we come to look into them, we find them chiefly composed of grotesques,—legs, arms, heads, and tails, in most admired disorder,—varied only here and there by studies of leaf-form. The crowd of figures above, representing, presumably, a scene from the Apocalypse, draws away the attention from the purely architectural characteristics of the doorway; and one can hardly be edified by the spectacle of the four-and-twenty elders seated round the projecting part of an arch, in such positions that they would inevitably tumble off if they were not stuck on.

The Travellers' Club, in Pall Mall, may be cited as an example of the exact opposite to such modes of architectural treatment. This is what is generally called a "chaste" production, by which is meant a building whose decoration has been cut down to such small proportions that it can hardly be said to have any at all. In the anxiety to shun

extravagance, all elements of originality have been carefully eliminated. A few small classical columns, a string-course of ball-and-ribbon ornament between the windows, and a conventional flower ornament above, make up the sum of the special decoration of the building. It has been shown that this absence of embellishment does not necessarily involve a sacrifice of architectural excellence ; but as this structure displays straight lines almost exclusively, and is devoid of colour, it will be seen that it is reduced to rely for beauty upon the mere relations between its width and height, and the size of its windows and door.* Such extremes are variously contrasted, through the natural processes of action and reaction ; severity and dearth of beautiful ornament following as a matter of course upon extravagance—the Classical style supplanting the Flamboyant.

Some principle, then, of moderation is required ; some principle which will allow the full development of individuality, and at the same time confine energy of thought and action within reasonable limits. Such a principle will be found in the idea mentioned at the outset of this chapter as underlying all healthy architectural art,—the idea, namely, of voluntary service ; of perfect freedom which restrains itself ; of duty which might be ignored, but is recognised ; of bounds which might be passed, but never are transgressed. The first step towards the realisation of a wholesome decorative system is the clear recognition of the material services of the building.

* Compare the gloomy Reform Club, next door.

It is a house, or a hall, or a church, first,—and a thing of beauty afterwards. And if this principle be carried out into the minor details, it will be found to simplify the whole question of decoration in a remarkable degree. A column will be seen to be ill ornamented by any twistings, or elaborate and deep-cut sculptures, which interfere with the expression of its sustaining functions. A capital will be seen to be best adorned when its foliage spreads and bends around it with a springing grace, which helps to convey the idea of its supporting grasp of the superstructure; a leaf-moulding will be most graceful when the flowers or forest leaves which furnish its design are seen to be growing freely from their stem, and to go their different ways without restraint, but still to keep within the limits prescribed by the general structural design, and thus, while individually complete, to fulfil also their appointed functions as parts of a larger whole.* The Classical architect gathers them, and ties them up into garlands and festoons, and the delight of their service is at once destroyed. We feel them to be helpless, withering things, which only keep in their places because they are unable to move.

Architecture, then, is the expression of a cheerful and unwearied sense of duty, conveyed in certain inanimate things. The noblest Architecture is that which most fully embodies this idea; and if it be asked what school of the art answers best to this condition, the reply will involve at least the rejection of

* The principle of abstraction, before referred to, also operates here in an important way.

the cold slavery of modern Classical schools,—doing their work, however well, and however correctly, without feeling and without delight,—and still more decisively the rejection of the extravagances which follow Classical models in disdaining pleasure in their work, and at the same time neglect the safeguard of the Classical restraint. It is not wise to claim for any particular school of Architecture unbounded admiration, or to quote it as embracing every kind of excellence. There is a most unwholesome tendency at the present day to rush headlong into a Gothic revival, and to rapturously welcome everything to which the term “Gothic” can be applied, without any serious consideration of its intrinsic qualities. It should always be borne in mind that the freedom of Gothic architecture, whilst it is its greatest merit, is also its greatest danger; and that a building is not always admirable because it is original, although it must be bad if it is no more than a hash of other men’s stale ideas. The estimation of Architecture requires good sense and a right appreciation of Beauty, as well as a hatred of mere conventionalities, and a desire to recognise independent thought.

This, of all the arts, is an art of deep morality. Not only does it help us to take delight in the inevitable surroundings of our daily lives, but, as a part of the poetry of Service, it may serve to teach us the great lesson, how duty itself may become a pleasure—not by letting it bind us down with strong fetters of necessity, but by acknowledging it cheerfully, and submitting ourselves to its dictates with the sincere acquiescence of our own free-will. Such voluntary

service is a far higher and better thing than unregulated licence, and it is something more than a mere æsthetic law which determines the value of clustered columns and foliated tracery, and which dictates the design of the leaves upon the capital, and sets the sculptured panel beneath the arching of the door.

CHAPTER III.

SCULPTURE.

AMONGST the subtlest and most refined pleasures of sense are those connected with Form. The world of Nature, as it meets our gaze, combines various elements of æsthetic delightfulness. Colour occurs in many ways as an independent source of Beauty, whilst brilliant lights, and sombre shadows, and fitful, glinting sunbeams offer their different gradations for our enjoyment, without reference to the objects upon which they fall. And just as these are capable of giving pleasure by virtue of their inherent qualities, so the form with which they are often associated has an æsthetic value of its own. A simple outline may be full of loveliness, and when it is associated with so much light and shade as to present a form of three dimensions—whether imitated on a flat surface, or produced in actual relief—capabilities of exquisite beauty are afforded. We admire a landscape for its hues, the outlines of its trees and buildings against the sky, the contrasts of dark trunks and light foliage, of gloomy rocks and glistening streams; but, underlying all this, there is the general delightfulness of the undulation of surface, the rugged prominence of the

hillside, the soft swell of the meadows, the varied roundness of bush and tree; which break the broad daylight with sharply-defined shadows, or melt it into softer light.

This quality of solidity has a place in the æsthetic conditions of the greater part of those objects which appeal to the sense of sight, and its value is therefore sufficiently apparent in Art. It occurs by representation very largely in Painting, but it is the chief instrument of the two arts of Architecture and Sculpture; and in these is actually produced, and not merely imitated. We have seen, in speaking of Architecture, that while both the arts in question employ solid form, and while they are often closely allied, there is this fundamental difference between them—that one uses form always with an understood purpose of material usefulness, whereas the other employs it for its own sake. It was noticed also that there is this further broad distinction between them: the one is not of necessity directly imitative of natural objects, the other is always so. So that the merely æsthetic sources of pleasure contained in architectural form—viz., those connected with outline and solidity—are all present in Sculpture, and there is added to them the condition of vitality which serves to distinguish the latter art.

It has been assumed throughout, that the imitation of vital form *is* a necessary condition of unapplied Sculpture. It is needful now to inquire why this should be so, and to endeavour to ascertain, upon reasonable grounds, the proper scope and limits of an independent art of solid form.

The case of imitative Sculpture, when associated with Architecture, has already been referred to in treating of the latter art; and it was shown to be properly representative, or typical, of natural objects only, on the simple ground that man's work is not worth copying when compared with God's work. It is clear, however, that imitation for decorative purposes should be restrained by, and subordinated to, the material usefulness with which it is connected. In treating of Sculpture for Sculpture's sake, the principle that Nature is the great storehouse of all real loveliness will, of course, apply; but the questions arise, Why may not such Sculpture deal, like Architecture, with abstracted form,—why need it be *directly* imitative at all,—and if it must be so, why may we not imitate rocks and clouds,—and why should it not be possible for the sculptor, like the painter, to show forth some of the beauty which lives in common things even of man's handiwork? A cottage room, with a few rough chairs and boxes, and an old man resting by the fire-side, will furnish a painter with a sufficient motive for a picture. Why, it may be asked, should not the sculptor represent something of the same kind? A sculptured imitation of the room would be manifestly impracticable;* but the other accessories, constituting the "still life" of the picture, would be quite imitable in Sculpture, and why should they not be represented? These questions seem at first to be very simple ones, and to be answerable by a sort of instinctive feeling, or by an appeal to common sense. It will be found, however, that the laws which govern independent

* Except in perspective in bas-relief; of which more hereafter.

Sculpture are not only very sweeping in extent, but also very subtle in application; and although some of them appear to be practically obvious enough, the reasons upon which they are founded are of great importance in those refinements of treatment, as well as of choice of subject, which distinguish good Sculpture from bad.

Now, all the arts are dependent upon certain material conditions. The musician is limited not only by the capabilities of sound, but also practically by the qualities of vibrating mediums, and the compass of the human voice; the painter is restricted to the use of a flat surface for his representations; the actor is bound by time and place, and the limits within which inward feelings can be outwardly expressed; the poet must paint, and carve, and act, and sing, with words alone. The highest result is attained in every art only when the means are fully adapted to the end in view. Any employment of elaborate means for the attainment of a trivial object, or any straining after great effects with obviously insufficient materials, will be fatal to the dignity of the art. There are three very striking conditions of Sculpture.

First, the realisation of solid form, which it shares with Architecture. This points at once to imitation as its leading function. For it is essential to the well-being of all Art that the artist should have something to convey. In Architecture he has a definite purpose to carry out, and he embodies that in beautiful forms, and adorns it with graceful fancies. He is not obliged to imitate anything, because he has already a sufficient reason and motive for his work. Not so in

Sculpture, *per se*. The sculptor has no material uses to serve; the functions of his art are entirely æsthetic and expressional. There is no reason, therefore, why he should abstract the beauties connected with natural form from their original associations, since he has not to adapt them to any service. Nor is it easy to see how he could do so even if he wished; the result would be a mere abortion,—the *raison d'être* would be wanting. The nearest approach to such an art of solid form is to be found in the case of vases, and the like, which are often practically useless. But in such cases a pretence of usefulness is always made to carry off the absurdity which it is felt would result from their purposeless elaboration, and they, accordingly, come within the region of applied Art. It is felt, in short, that solid matter should either represent somewhat, or do somewhat. As a mere ideal shaping of masses, Sculpture would involve an altogether excessive expenditure of time and energy.

The imitation must clearly be of form. Whether colour may be added or not, it is obvious that, in so far as a mass is *sculptured*, it gives form for form, and is essentially concerned with form.

The second condition is that of comparative permanence. A work in marble or bronze will last for long ages. Then, too, any considerable piece of sculpture is ponderous, and cannot be readily moved from place to place like a picture, nor put away on a shelf, and taken out only when wanted, like a book. Where it is placed, there it will (speaking generally) remain—conspicuous.

The third condition is that of difficulty. No art

is so laborious, or presents so many obstacles to success, as this. Its materials are hard. There is, of course, a form of the art which is plastic, and carvings may be made in such substances as wood. In such cases the conditions of the representation are considerably altered, and subjects may be chosen, and modes of treatment adopted, which would not be suitable to different materials. But Sculpture, as a general rule, employs marble or bronze; and to reduce these to the form required demands much labour and time. Again, whatever the material of the art, there is the difficulty of treatment occasioned by the many-sidedness of Sculpture. In Painting, only one aspect of the subject has to be represented; but when the difficulty of arranging figures gracefully in that art is at all realised, it may be to some extent perceived how greatly this is increased when the figure is brought out from the canvas, and may be surveyed from behind and from the sides,—when the disposition of limbs and drapery which satisfies the artist's eye at one point of view, has to be considered in connection with their effect when seen from several other positions. Some writers on Art have demanded that Sculpture should produce a satisfactory effect in eight different aspects. Others, recognising the extreme difficulty of constructing figures of such varied grace and dignity, have suggested that Sculpture ought always to be so far associated with Architecture as to be partially shielded from inspection by a wall, or more fully, by being placed within a niche. Even thus, a figure

may be seen from at least three different points of view, and although one may be chosen for the most striking, allowance must be made for the effect of the work under other aspects. These considerations show, at least, the absurdity of taking a piece of sculpture away from an original architectural position, and placing it where it may be seen on all sides, as in the case of the Shakspeare monument in Westminster Abbey, a copy of which, set up on high in the middle of Leicester Square, presents from behind an appearance compounded of a farm-labourer's smock-frock and an old woman's bed-gown. On the other hand, it may be noticed in passing that there is no surer sign of a vicious and degraded art than carelessness about completing those portions of sculpture which are not expected to be fully seen. They may be seen some day; and although an artist is not bound to make that side of his figure or group which will be set against a wall particularly striking, it shows that he cares little about his art for its own sake, if he is content to leave parts of his work in the rough, because they are not to be prominently displayed. We do not find the backs of the Elgin Marbles uncompleted, even when they were intended to be placed in the tympanum of a portico. They are less striking, but drapery and flesh are alike finished.

Lastly, there is the difficulty caused by the great accuracy of representation required. In Painting, the use of colour enables the artist to give the effect of an object, and to expound its beauty to us, with comparatively little labour as regards the form. In a landscape

of Turner's the outlines are very often ill-defined, and the figures will seldom bear a close inspection. Yet Turner was no mean draughtsman, as his studies at South Kensington show ; but he chose to gain his effects chiefly by means of colour ; and at a distance from his paintings sufficient to allow the force of the colours to be felt, the irregular patches are seen to be full of meaning, and graceful forms reveal themselves where all before seemed utter chaos. In Sculpture there is no such resource. The representation of form must be absolutely correct ; it cannot be slurred over, it cannot be thrown into relief by ingeniously-concocted backgrounds, or made more striking by varieties of tint and shading. It must be accurately carried out into its smallest details, and whatever knowledge may be necessary for other imitative artists, it is clear that the knowledge of form required by a sculptor must be nothing less than profound.

These three conditions—closeness of imitation, permanence, and practical difficulty—clearly point to very noble subjects as alone worthy of the art. It must be a waste of time to spend the labour entailed by Sculpture upon any but very dignified themes ; nor would it be worth while to imitate trivial objects with the closeness possible to the sculptor, nor to embody them in the permanent forms of this art. Observe that there is now no question of throwing around such trivial things the halo of chromatic and atmospheric loveliness, which made Constable declare that he had never seen an ugly thing in his life. The forms alone are now to be considered, and whatever they are, such they will appear. They

cannot be modified by other influences. We may paint all sorts of things in a picture, for we may also paint the effect of Heaven's light and air upon them; but in Sculpture we can only represent the forms of things themselves. Nature will light them up in her own way, and we cannot ensure her sending any special sunbeams to deck them with an extrinsic beauty.

Further, it is necessary that the art should be limited to subjects about whose form the Imagination may be exercised. Now, the Imagination, as we have seen, always penetrates to the soul and spirit of things. All Beauty is used by Art only as showing forth some vital or moral force, the power of some Divine Artificer, or the influence of some human mind. Sculpture presents form rather than represents it, and, therefore, if the art is to be imaginative, it must be concerned with form in which there is a spirit to be discerned. If it imitates an inanimate object, especially if that object is rigid and of unchangeable form, it can give us nothing but the outside of it; it can copy it, line for line, but it can tell us nothing about it. It is only in Vital Form that the surface—softly changing with the movements of the breath, with the full pulse of health, the smile of joy, the quiverings of anger, or yielding to the corroding influences of toil and care—offers to the sculptor full scope for the embodiment of thought and passion. Even the forms of the vegetable world, and of the lower orders of animals, must be relegated to the sphere of decorative art, or be made to fulfil subordinate functions, if the art aspires to any high dignity. Some of these forms are exquisitely

beautiful, but their life is not sufficiently intelligent to warrant their representation (as a rule) in independent Sculpture. This art depends, indeed, upon the absolute grace of form, but still more upon the spirit which it embodies. Thus the form of the higher animals, and more especially that of man, is worthy of the elaboration of Sculpture ; but clouds, and waves, and armour, and the like, have rightly no place in the art whatever. They can have no soul in them; they are lifeless, and so, in such mere outward imitation, for ever dumb.

The rule thus afforded by a consideration of the primary conditions of the art is confirmed by the practice of all the greatest and best schools of Sculpture which the world has yet produced, and further reasons for its absolute cogency will appear as we proceed. For the present it may be noticed that it is a law of very wide application. Not only may we not represent in Sculpture any inanimate object for its own sake, but in the representation of the human form, we may surround it with such accessories only as are necessary for its fuller appreciation, or are fitted to enhance its dignity and truth. Thus, drapery may only be given in Sculpture as associated with vital form, and should then be of such a character that it may be seen to be altogether subordinate to the figure which it clothes, and may exercise its function of modest covering, or (in the case of portrait-sculpture) of better realisation, without ostentation, and without any special stress being laid upon the mechanical devices of its representation.* The want

* Mr Ruskin has pointed out that drapery has two great functions

of right feeling in this matter has given rise to the greatest absurdities of modern Sculpture. Our statesmen, warriors, and poets appear—now be-robed, be-ribboned, and be-tasselled, like Lord Palmerston in Westminster Abbey—now half naked, with a single classic garment flung round them, like Dr Johnson in S. Paul's. Modern dress is certainly unsatisfactory enough from an artistic point of view, but even it becomes tolerable when it is made thoroughly subordinate to the figure beneath it. All dress should be given by the sculptor as the clothing of a man, and not as a curiosity of an archæologist, or a specimen of tailor's handiwork. In Greek Sculpture the drapery is always simple. In the Elgin bas-reliefs the male figures are wholly or partially nude—a single loose garment, fastened only at the neck, suffices. The women are clothed; but in these figures as well as those from the pediments of the Parthenon, the drapery is always of some light, clinging material, which falls into minute folds, so as to indicate clearly the line of demarcation between it and the flesh, and to give all sorts of subtle and tender indications of the form beneath, uniting exquisite grace with grand and simple flow of line. This is the perfect type of sculptured drapery. Clothing in Sculpture should cover with due modesty, but never attract attention to itself as of any consequence apart from the figure to which it belongs. The graceful mien, the firm limbs, the pure outlines of the form should be per-

of expression. It can express past or present motion in the figure, and (at rest) the agency of gravitation. This is apart from its necessary functions as a covering.

ceived, but the dress forgotten. Only thus is it fit to be sculptured at all.

This rule about vital form will, moreover, lead us to disapprove of all those trophies of cannon and other weapons, flags, ships, and armour, in which sculptors of the memorial tablet order especially delight. These things are sufficiently condemned in all works of art, by the fact that they imitate man's workmanship only; but they are above all to be cast out of the realm of Sculpture, for there they contradict both general and special laws.

There are two laws of imitative Art which are especially valuable in their bearing upon Sculpture. Briefly stated, they are as follows: (1.) It is essential to this kind of Art that it should imitate frankly—in fact, that it should *be* Art and not Nature. (2.) In this imitation, the art should confine itself to those characteristics which will give it the fullest scope, and which will not suggest the want of a further step in realisation beyond its powers. We saw the value of these laws very clearly, with respect to the great imitative art of Acting. It was remarked that the object of the Drama is not to produce a bit of real life upon the stage, but to produce the effect of it; to bring out its poetry, the feelings and motives which actuate the persons engaged in it: and, further, that not only is complete outward realism foreign to the purpose of the art, but it is never completely successful. As soon as it approaches too closely to reality, the discrepancy in other respects becomes painfully apparent; and the illusion which the imagination is content to accept is at once destroyed

when it appeals to the senses. We are quite able to imagine, for the time being, that canvas scenery and wooden flooring are a street in London; but as soon as a cab crosses the stage, the sound of the horse's hoofs upon the boards upsets the whole illusion, and we are no longer in the open air, but most consciously seated in such and such a theatre. Thus, to state in another form the laws above referred to: external realism is not the end of imitative Art, and any attempt to achieve it defeats its own object by destroying the illusion of which it *is* capable.

The application of these rules to Sculpture has been admirably shown by Sir Charles Eastlake. He points out that imitative Art, being jealous of its own independence, insists rather upon differences than upon similarities between its means and those of Nature. Thus, in Sculpture, form is given for form. Accordingly, the form assumes peculiar beauty, the colour is different from that of Nature, and so forth. "The *lifelessness, hardness, and rigidity* of the material," says the writer, "point out the elastic surface of life and flexible substances as the fittest objects for the artist's skill." Further, if imitation be permitted to lose itself in realisation, we are immediately reminded of the absence of those qualities which are necessary to render the realisation complete. When we see the real doors in the Nightingale Monument at Westminster, we perceive at once that the skeleton, which pretends to be coming out of them, cannot move an inch, and are tempted to look in and see how he is fastened.

If we examine the different departments of Sculp-

ture by the light of these principles, we shall find our judgment of the art very greatly assisted. We see, for example, why it is that the representation of the nude figure is so fully allowable in Sculpture. The difference between the hardness of the marble and the softness of the flesh, the difference in colour, in mobility, &c., constitute the representation, at once, an ideal one, and we can delight in the beauty of the naked form with all purity. Again, drapery, when used, must also be frankly imitated, otherwise it will make us conscious of the want of realism in the flesh. When both are imperfect, our imagination will supply the deficiency in each case; but if the white marble be deceptively like white drapery, we shall expect something more than white marble in face and hands. So, also, if hard substances, such as buttons, buckles, and the like, or accessories, such as boxes, baskets, columns, &c.,—especially such as have no defined colour,—be deceptively realised, we shall miss the corresponding qualities in other materials. It will seem a deficiency in the coat to be as hard as the button, in the folds of the dress to be as unyielding as the lid of the box, in the human figure to be as rigid as the pedestal upon which it leans. On the other hand, it equally destroys the illusion proposed by the art when objects are selected for imitation whose form is ill-defined, but which depend for their effect upon texture or colour, which cannot be conveyed in the new material. Thus, in the statue of Bishop Middleton in S. Paul's, the contrast between two great outstretched masses of opaque marble and the diaphanous lawn-sleeves they are intended to represent

is too great to allow the spectator to yield himself to any illusion.

In bronze, perhaps, the danger of over-realisation is greater than in marble, since so many accessories can be completely reproduced in metal. At the same time, it is always well for the artist to make the most of the means at his disposal; and a statue in bronze may be expected to present a freer introduction of small details than it would be wise, or even possible, for a sculptor to attempt in marble.

Once more, as to the oft-disputed question of the colouring of statues. It is well known that the ancients occasionally employed colour in Sculpture, but it seems probable that it was only used by way of emphasis, to mark more clearly the difference of parts which might be confounded when seen from a distance. However this may be, we must at least reject the practice of colouring of sculpture, as contrary to the first laws of imitative Art. Adam Smith, remarking on the bad effect of colouring the eyes of statues, quotes a remark of a gentleman,—“I cannot bear to see statues and *then to speak to me*.” It is evident that the art consists. The imitation being imperfect, we are led to expect something more which cannot be supplied. Complete realisation, however, is not to be assisted by colour; but this is not the object of Art. The imagination must supply what cannot be exercised if the result is to be Art. The aim is the exact representation of men and women as they are, not as they are imagined. The result is—Art. The aim is the representation of the age, the representation of the world, with all its weaknesses, with

clockwork movements, as the highest efforts of Art, in place of the abstract, unreal, marble figures of ancient Greece. We may admit, to a certain extent, pretty, conventional colour in such work as Dresden china, whose size is a sufficient guarantee against undue illusion; but, as a general rule, it must be absolutely excluded from this art. If we had even Correggio's flesh-tints in Sculpture, the result would be unpleasantly sensual, and suggest nothing so much as an anatomical museum.

A further consideration of the limits of sculptural art, as indicated by the above rules, will show the impropriety of attempting to obtain the appearance of perspective in works sculptured in relief. The effect of all sculpture is, indeed, obtained by shadow; but the art has no command of such light and shade as will produce anything resembling aerial phenomena. Accordingly, carvings which affect to produce this result invariably make the insufficiency of their means painfully conspicuous. The more distant figures may be diminished in size, but cannot be diminished in force. Thus, in the representation of Lord Palmerston speaking in the House of Commons, on the pedestal of the statue in Parliament Square, the practical *flatness* of the thing cannot be disguised by the converging lines of the benches, which obstinately decline to appear to recede. The fact that the artist has been trying to cheat the senses is apparent, but no illusion is produced. So in the Harbord and Cottrell Monument at Westminster, whereon it has been attempted to represent a naval battle in sculptured perspective.

The waves do not appear to recede, but the sea seems to be standing on end ; whilst smoke and sails, being of necessity alike represented by masses of white marble, are mixed in inseparable confusion. Instances like this prove that although sculpture in the round may aim at the closest and most direct imitation of form as it actually occurs, a modification of this process will not suffice for sculpture in relief. If we attempt to represent a figure detached from another, and nearer to the eye, by a figure highly relieved upon another of less elevation, the former will cast a shadow upon the latter, and the desired effect will not be gained. In the Elgin bas-reliefs, where a man is supposed to be standing in front of a horse, it will be found that there is little or no difference in the degree of relief of both figures, that of the horse's body being only reduced where the figure of the man occurs. In the same way, a horse's head may be seen quite embedded in the shoulder of a horseman beside him, the object being to secure an outline for the nearer figure, but no attempt being made to produce the effect of greater and less distance by actual difference in relief. It must be borne in mind that, in this kind of sculpture, the artist has only command of the shadows produced by uniform light falling upon objects whose actual distance from the eye is little varied. Thus, not only does the representation of considerable differences of distance lie beyond his province, but in the representation of minor differences, any attempt to render them by a corresponding scale of relief would produce a totally dissimilar result.

An outline can only be got by an elevation or depression ; consequently, where an outline is required, there must be a difference of relief, whether this occurs in the natural object or not. The same thing is observable in all sculpture. A difference of material or colour can only be marked in this way. A dark spot must be cut into a hole, a line can only be drawn with a hollow or a ridge, a pattern can only be traced by a series of indentations or prominences. Thus, whilst the complete imitation of form is possible in some kinds of sculpture, even this must be sacrificed to the producing of the effect of form ; and the powers of Sculpture, in this respect, are so far restricted, that any attempt to compete with Painting in the rendering of distance, or any effort to adhere strictly to realistic methods, will only serve to display the imperfection of the art. The capabilities of each art are sufficient for its requirements in its own sphere, and whenever its limitation becomes conspicuous, there is evidence that its proper bounds have been overstepped.

In the estimation of Sculpture we have of course to consider, as in other arts, the sentiment which it embodies. No art can be good which serves only to enshrine a paltry thought ; and even those who cannot appreciate the material excellences of Sculpture, may at least be able to recognise the dignity of the motives which guided the sculptor's hand, and learn to repudiate claims which are founded upon pretentious dulness, or mawkish sentimentality. Those who have visited that most dismal of all show-places, the crypt of S. Paul's, may possibly remember a

more than ordinarily ghastly tablet to the memory of Captain John Cooke, of H.M.S. "Bellerophon." * The naval character of the tablet is indicated by an impossible part of a ship in the background. The general design consists of a woman accompanied by two gigantic children, one of whom is trying on a helmet. At first, this strikes one as being intended for a satire upon the prowess of the defunct, but an old guide-book informs us that it represents Britannia consoled for her loss by her children. Now, consider the utter insensibility to the qualities of a brave man displayed by the artist in this production! Of the hero himself there is nothing told. We are treated to an **allegory** which would have been just as applicable if he had died in a fit of apoplexy instead of in fighting for his country. And whilst it is perfectly true that "Britannia" may be consoled for the loss of a brave son by the reflection that she has "five hundred good as he," what must have been the state of mind of the man who could endeavour to represent this by the clumsy gambols of some naked urchins, playing with the helmet and trident which serve as the emblems of the principal figure! This is perhaps an extreme instance, but the aisles of our great London Cathedral display plentiful examples of scarcely less absurd confusion of ideas. The usual

* It is fittingly placed at the entrance to that part of the crypt which contains the ponderous, gloomy car that bore the Duke of Wellington's body through the streets of London—now garnished with dingy and dilapidated models of his coronet and baton, much the worse for wear and dust, and surrounded by some of the black hangings used at Chelsea, with hearse-plumes and other abominations fit only for the rag-merchant.

mode of celebrating the fame of a distinguished officer, in these monuments, consists in the representation of a sarcophagus, bearing a portrait medallion of the late lamented, which "Britannia" (or "Fame," or "Victory," or some other female) decorates with a garland;—a weeping soldier (or sailor, as the case may be) being introduced on the other side to balance the composition. This main idea may, of course, be varied in the details. "Britannia" may be consoled by "Fame;" or "Victory" and "Fame" may do something together in the way of garlands and flags; or a small boy may be represented as being incited to deeds of valour by gazing on the medallion, and so on. The climax of absurdity is perhaps reached in the monument to Commander Burgess, R.N., to whom "Victory" is represented as presenting a sword; the goddess being draped, but the sailor quite naked, with the exception of a cloth which he appears to have thrown hastily over one shoulder, feeling no doubt somewhat embarrassed under the circumstances. Other heroes fall from their horses into somebody's arms, or are lowered into stone graves a few inches deep. It is hardly necessary to discuss these pieces of sculpture seriously, or to say very much to prove that—without going at all into the merits or demerits of their execution—we may assign them their place as works of art at once, from a consideration of the thoughts which they embody. Compare with such productions Mr Foley's equestrian statue of Sir James Outram.*

* Lately exhibited in London for a short time, before being sent to India.

The soldier reins up his horse quickly, pulling it almost upon its haunches ; and, turning in the saddle, gazes intently behind him. His right hand grasps a sword, which projects sideways as the rider steadies himself in turning round. Some character is revealed to us in that statue. We see the leader of men, eager, resolute, self-controlled. We see the calm decision, the indomitable courage written on the brow, whilst the intense vigour and energy of the group—the sudden stop and anxious questioning gaze—tell of difficulties and dangers, conflict, haste, and hardship. This sets before us somewhat of the poetry of a brave man's life ; this was worth putting into bronze.

Nor is it difficult to apply the ordinary tests of right feeling and good taste to the treatment of single figures, apart from the incidents which may be associated with them. When we see Sir Cloudesley Shovell, at Westminster, represented in an elaborate periwig, and in a sort of Roman dress which makes him look half-naked, we are quite prepared to find utter inexpressiveness and blankness in the face, and are not surprised to see two feeble cherubs seated uncomfortably above the columns on either side. Simplicity, absence of affectation, and an evident desire to go to the root of the matter with which the artist has to deal, are pre-eminently required in Sculpture ; and any lingering upon accessories, any sign of contentment with mere outward things, any indication, however slight, of heartlessness or levity on the sculptor's part, is fatal to the value of his work. With these must be classed the tricks of the

modern Italian school,—the simulation of transparent veils and the like, the production of light and trivial effects of a "picturesque" character,—the various clever manipulations, in short, which catch the eye at first, but have no depth of beauty, and fail to touch the heart. These are, at least, excluded from the roll of Sculpture's noblest works, and, whatever technical ability they may display, are of low rank in the domain of Poetical Art.

It was stated above that the conditions of Sculpture are such that the art, in its higher developments, can only be worthily employed about subjects possessing inherent nobleness. There is a difference between the sentiment suitable to Verbal Poetry and that of all imitative Art, in addition to the difference of subjects suggested by the nature of the means available. While language can carry us direct to the thought and feeling which underlie the appearances and actions presented to us, imitative Art can only convey them *through* these outward manifestations. It can therefore, rightly, deal with those emotions and ideas only which are associated with external beauty and dignity; otherwise it would sacrifice its *æsthetic* value. This is especially the case in the art under consideration. In it there is no room for trifling. It imitates so closely, and at the same time is so deprived of extrinsic aids to the appreciation of what it represents, that all that it has to do with must be in itself worthy of our earnest attention, or the labour which has been bestowed upon it will have been thrown away. Hence, the poet may deal with rugged forms, rude minds, untutored hearts, for he can let us into

their secrets ; and the painter, too, for they may be parts of some grand or beautiful whole, although themselves insignificant to look upon. But the sculptor must have exquisite form, or his art will be degraded. So, as Lessing points out, Virgil may make Laocoon scream, but the open mouth would be ugly in sculpture, and the stone Laocoon must bear his torture in silence.* A further qualification is suggested by Lessing as applicable to Sculpture and Painting, in both of which a single phase only of an action is capable of representation—viz., that the highest point of feeling should not be touched, otherwise the imagination of the spectator will have no room for exercise. Timomachus depicted Medea, not in the very act of murdering her children, but just before, when revenge and maternal affection were struggling for the mastery.

The sentiment of Sculpture, then, must not only be pure and healthy—it should be something more—it should be dignified.

But it will strike the reader at once that in representative arts, in Sculpture at any rate, the sentiment is by no means the only matter of importance. He will know perfectly well that it is not enough to criticise the expression of a statue. He will recollect that the works which those who have most studied the subject agree to consider the finest the world has ever seen are, many of them, mere mutilated fragments. Mr Ruskin asserts that the Greeks never represented human expression in Sculpture at all.

* See "Laocoon :—or the Limits of Poetry and Painting," where the whole subject is elaborately discussed.

and we must at least allow that there is a charm in their works independent of any moral or intellectual associations. In fact, although Sculpture may be used with grand and noble meaning, its functions are, to a great extent, æsthetic. We have seen that whatever it expresses must be expressed *through* form, and whether or not that form conveys any strictly intellectual ideas, it is absolutely requisite that it should awaken the emotions connected with beauty and perfection. Vital form it must be, for it must have some energy and purpose within it to make it a fit vehicle for the conveyance of noble emotion, but it comes before us as expressing *feelings* in the first place ;—the joy of loveliness, the solemn elevation of the spirit which the contemplation of majesty and grandeur can effect.

So much has been already said respecting the value of ideas of material Beauty and Sublimity, that it is not necessary to insist further upon it here ; but it is obvious that the appreciation of this sort of artistic excellence is much more difficult to attain to than the due estimation of moral or intellectual characteristics. This requires a general cultivation of mind and heart, that, in many cases, a special education. Vital form, for instance, is not to be understood without study, it is a very subtle and complicated thing. As it occurs in Sculpture, it involves not only the general principles of anatomy, but the most delicate gradations of surface also. And in its full development as an imitative art, Sculpture requires the most accurate rendering of these subtleties as a condition of merit. A fine piece of sculpture

does not merely give the general effect of the bounding lines of its figures, it gives also the dimples of childhood or the intricate furrows of age. It indicates differences of texture—the soft, yielding substance of cheek and lip, the hard, tense condition of the forehead—following with minute fidelity the ever-varying curves of the surface. These produce soft gradations of shadow, which conduce to the general effect of the work, and make all the difference in the result to an educated eye.

So in portrait-sculpture, the imaginative feeling which grasps and realises character, must in this art be subject to absolute truth of form. It follows from this that commonplace men and women should be (to say the least) rarely sculptured. If they have vulgar features, the art cannot disguise the fact. It can only take forms as it finds them, bringing out their higher expression indeed, and showing them at their best, but reproducing them with the utmost fidelity. A true sculptor does not give us what is generally understood by an "idealised" bust, that is to say, a figure presenting one or two features of resemblance to its supposed original, and being thus just recognisable, whilst the details are slurred over, or treated without reference to the corresponding characteristics in the person represented. He reproduces in the marble the subtle marks of character, the delicate lines cut in the human countenance by the fine chisels of thought and care. We want indeed the *poetry* of Form, but in such case it is the poetry of individual and not typical Form. The idealism which distinguishes great Art in this department is nothing

but a keener perception of truth; and seeing the lesser as well as the greater facts clearly, it sees also the expressive value of all.

And, indeed, this remark is applicable to Sculpture in all its branches. It is not enough that it should be attractive, interesting, pathetic; it must also be learned. The mere seizing of salient features, the production of a general resemblance to a particular type of form, will not suffice; it is by the treatment of the subtler and finer details that the artist must rightly be judged.

How far such knowledge as is necessary to this wise judgment is at present obtainable from the ordinary public, it is not difficult to say. There is no reason why we should not some day come to care a little more about the loveliness of the world around us, and think it no folly to take delight in manly grace and womanly beauty as the highest forms of this material excellence. We do this theoretically now; but, practically, only in a blind, sensuous fashion, careless whether our tastes are right or wrong. But until we learn to cultivate our æsthetic pleasures rightly, and to have no half-concealed, half-pretended scorn of physical beauty, but study it and delight in it wisely, we shall have no adequate popular appreciation of Sculpture. Certainly our modern modes of life are not such as to conduce greatly to that perception of the poetry of Nature which leads most surely to the understanding of the poetry of Art. It is impossible, at any rate, to judge this art of Sculpture rightly unless we have some knowledge of vital form, and can perceive its finer graces as well as its broader and more general expression. All Art should be

popular, but it should appeal to popular knowledge rather than to popular ignorance; and the low condition of Sculpture at this time may be accounted for by the absence from current modes of thought of that refined sentiment which delights in the material loveliness of all God's works, and feels it to be the outward manifestation of a spirit of love and beneficence, as well as a sensitive medium which will receive the good or evil impressions of human minds and hearts.

For it must not be forgotten that, in its most mechanical aspects, the Form with which Sculpture has to do is no dead thing. We shall often find it possible to disconnect even its highest works from direct moral teaching, or purely intellectual associations, but, even so, good Sculpture involves earnest thought and deep feeling. It has to show forth the inherent dignity of our outward humanity, so often warped and worn by our licensed passions and our inevitable toil,—the exquisite beauty still lingering around us, though we crush it down with our fashions, and degrade it with our artificial appliances. And while it sets it before us as a combination of lines and surfaces, suited to gratify our senses by their mechanical relations, it shows it to us also as sensitive and passionate; as bound up with our emotional consciousness, intellectual attributes, and moral force; as containing within it a principle of power which mere matter does not possess; and thus aims ever at more intimate knowledge and fuller appreciation of that form, which, in view of its mechanical complexity, but still more of its vitality, must be indeed pronounced to be fearfully and wonderfully made.

CHAPTER IV.

PAINTING.

PAINTING is, for obvious reasons, the widest in its scope of all the imitative arts. It may be said, in some sense, to embrace within its sphere of representation all visible things. Not only can it convey definite forms, but it is also able to give expression to effects of light, of colour, and of space,—to reproduce upon canvas the influence of sun and air upon the appearance of material objects. It is free to abstract the characteristics of things, or to represent them fully, and is as little confined in the selection of its subjects as it is in their treatment. It may be rightly employed in the representation of still life, of architecture, and of landscape; in the study of animals, in portraiture, in the illustration of allegory and mythology, and in historical and religious subjects. In this respect it has practically no limits. From a bunch of grapes to a storm at sea, from an old-world myth to the story of to-day, from simple scenes of village life to councils and campaigns which have decided the destiny of empires, from local customs and passing manners to events forming the basis of a religion—no facts are so trivial that this art will disdain to notice

them ; no objects so sublime, no events so pregnant of results, that it will not endeavour to grasp their grandeur and their significance.

At the same time, Painting, like every other art, is subject to certain restrictive conditions. In the first place, it is limited to purely external circumstances, and this fact, as we have already seen, confines its expression of mental and moral truths not only to those which are capable of outward manifestation, but in some degree to those which are connected with external grace and dignity. This restriction operates much less closely in the case of Painting than in that of Sculpture, but its influence cannot be altogether disregarded. Evil passions, and, to a certain extent, even deformity may prove attractive in this art, for the sake of other qualities which may be associated with them ; but at any rate, the necessity for the translation of the ideas proper to the subject into external equivalents renders some scenes and events unsuitable for pictorial illustration. Great results often spring from apparently insignificant causes, but though the poet may exhibit one as the germ of the other, the painter can give the facts only, and (speaking generally) is unable to unfold the mysteries of their potential force. Painting, moreover, is limited to the representation of a single moment of time. In this respect both the Drama and Poetry have greater advantages ; they can explain different phases of a single character, and show how circumstances tend to modify natural dispositions ; they can tell of the process of thought, and the sequence of events. All these things lie without the province of Painting ; and a story told by its



means must be either well known or very obvious. And in the department of inanimate Nature—in landscape, for example—shifting phenomena can only be partially expressed ; single effects, however fleeting, can be arrested, but the beauty and impressiveness of change and succession have no place in the sphere of the art.

These restrictions are sufficiently obvious, but the limitations of Painting in respect of its materials are not so generally recognised. We see, for example, that Painting is concerned with effects of light and shade, but the fact is frequently overlooked that the highest light which a painter can secure, namely, a white pigment, falls infinitely short of the brightness of actual illumination ; and that, in the same way, his deepest shade is a very different thing from the darkness which is caused in Nature by the absence or obstruction of light. No lamp-black—even apart from its surface-reflection—is so dark as a cleft in a rock ; no whiteness which the painter can produce, when seen in the ordinary diffused light of a room, equals the effect of a white object under the direct rays of the sun ; still less is any yellow or other pigment comparable with the brightness of those rays themselves. Yet Claude and Turner have painted the sun, and the glow of Nature under its influence, and the deficiency in force does not strike us. This result is achieved by elaborate artifice. The *relations* of light and shade are preserved as far as possible, contrast being made to supply the place of the intrinsic qualities which are wanting. The difficulty of rendering Nature's light and shade in

Painting will be seen when it is considered what a difference there is between the darkness of a cavern and that of the foliage round its mouth—what an interval between the shadow of this foliage and its lighter side—between the latter and the gray cliff above—between this and the white sea-bird sailing past it—between all and the radiance of the sky. Now, if the difference between cave and tree be accurately reproduced in Painting, there will be little room left for the representation of the other differences. So, also, if we mark exactly the interval between the light and shade of a prominent object, our resources will be exhausted, and we shall have no power to indicate the deeper shadows where the light is more subdued. Thus Rembrandt, whose object was to produce impressive effects of light, threw them into relief by bold shadows, which, however, were probably no further removed from his highest lights than the ordinary shadings of Nature are from hers. But the result was that he left himself no scope for deeper gloom, and many parts of his pictures, which in Nature would have been marked by wide differences of light and shade, are reduced to an almost uniform obscurity in which the details are nearly, if not quite, lost. Hence a science of light and shade, or *chiaroscuro*, as it is generally called, is very necessary for a painter. The bird which seems white against the cliff will seem dark against the bright sky. In the same way, if we look at some solid object strongly illuminated by a lamp against some background—say a wall—upon which the light falls evenly, we shall find that the wall seems darker

where it is contrasted with the illuminated side of the object than it does against the side which is in shadow. These, and a multitude of similar phenomena, must be noted by the artist, and their effects reproduced; and by availing himself of contrast, and by some compromise, the results attained with his limited resources may accurately *suggest* the corresponding phenomena in the chiaroscuro of Nature.

Again, the limitation imposed upon Painting by the nature of its resources is further shown in the matter of colour. Looking at some of the brilliant canvases of the great masters of the art, we are sensible of no defect in the means employed, but these means are in truth vastly inferior to those of Nature. To understand this rightly, it is necessary to bear in mind the real nature of colour. The popular notion is that it is something material, or at least something inherent in the objects in connection with which it is perceived. Now the fact is that colour does not exist by itself at all—it is merely a sensation.* It is an effect produced upon the nerves of sight by the action of certain kinds of light, and what we call the colour *of an object* consists merely in its power of reflecting or transmitting a particular kind of light to our eyes. Not that even the light itself is coloured. Men of science tell us that the sensation of light is caused by the minute undulations of a subtle ether which surrounds us on all sides, and that the differences in the length of the waves cause the corresponding varieties in the

* See a convenient little work entitled "A Manual of the Science of Colour," &c., by William Benson (London, Chapman & Hall, 1871), in which the whole subject is fully explained and discussed.

sensations which we call red, yellow, &c. Further, it has been discovered that white light itself consists of three colours blended together, viz., red, green, and blue,* and that colours, as a general rule, can only be produced either by separating these elements by means of a prism or other refracting medium; or by stopping some and transmitting others, as when light passes through stained glass, or the sun is seen through a fog; or by absorbing some and reflecting others, as in the case of all opaque coloured objects; or, lastly, by what is called "interference," that is to say, by throwing two rays of light together in such a way that some of the waves neutralise each other, and only some of them pass on,—as in the case of "Newton's rings," and many phenomena of polarised light, and the colours seen upon mother-of-pearl, soap-bubbles, "Barton's buttons," &c. The first and last of these sources of colour are not available to the painter. The colours produced by him are caused by light reflected from or through his pigments,† and these pigments are merely so many means of absorbing certain

* It was formerly thought that red, *yellow*, and blue were the three primary colours, but this has been proved by Sir John Herschel and others to be erroneous. Yellow and blue *pigments*, when mixed together, do indeed produce green, but even the best pigments do not represent pure prismatic colours. *Prismatic* blue and yellow do not make green, but prismatic green and red do combine to form yellow.

† In the case of water-colours, the light usually passes through the pigment to the white surface upon which the drawing is executed, and thence it is reflected to the eye, passing through the pigment a second time. In each of these transmissions a portion of the light is absorbed. The colour of the pigments commonly used in oil-painting is due to an internal reflection, the light passing into the body of the pigment, where a portion is absorbed, and the remainder being transmitted back to the eye.

kinds of light, and preventing their reaching the eye along with the rest. Thus yellow, which is compounded of red and green, is produced when the blue is absorbed; pink, consisting of red and blue, when the green is absorbed, and so on. Or the artist may mix together pigments capable of producing different colours, and by thus sending two or more kinds of light to the eye together, give rise to a compound sensation.* Nature's arrangements for obtaining these results are infinitely more perfect than any which the most accomplished painter can artificially effect. It has been remarked that a single geranium leaf, placed beside one of Turner's most brilliant pictures, would make the whole seem dull and colourless. And in addition to the superiority of Nature over Art when the means employed are identical, the former makes use of many methods which are denied to the latter. The deep tints between the petals of flowers, and the rich glow of a field of corn, are caused by the reflection of the light backwards and forwards between bodies which affect it in the same way, and so intensify the result. This can only be partially imitated by the painter by the use of a different or deeper pigment. Still less can he hope to attain, with the aid of feeble reflected light, to the glorious effects which Nature produces by interference or refraction, in the case of light transmitted to us from the glowing sky or the sparkling

* The hues produced by mixing pigments are more often due to the combination of their powers of absorption. Thus if a wash of blue (which generally contains a certain amount of green) be placed over one of yellow, green will be produced, for the yellow will absorb most of the blue rays, and the blue most of the red, while the green will traverse both pigments.

raindrops. Not merely is it hopeless to emulate the gorgeousness of tropical scenery,—to bring home the “gem of purest ray serene” which must be left to fall upon the “dark unfathomed caves” of far-off oceans; it is equally beyond the powers of the artist to depict adequately the common beauties seen under our colder Northern skies. Those who have witnessed a sunrise over distant hills, in a furnace of golden light, beneath a stretch of crimson and green, when the very air seems laden with colour, and every dewdrop glitters like a separate jewel, will not fail to recognise the necessary imperfection of Painting as an art imitative of colour.

Lastly, the restriction of the art is very readily seen in the fact that all that it represents,—solid matter, distance, space,—has to be depicted upon a flat surface. This is the most obvious discrepancy to be overcome by the artist; and the fact that his representation is produced under such palpable conditions renders Painting the most striking to vulgar minds of all the imitative arts. In this respect the technical skill of the artist cannot fail to be seen; and hence those who look only at the mechanical devices of the picture are sure to be gratified with any deception so produced for them. If a painted avenue of trees looks as if we could walk down it, or painted grapes as if they could be plucked and eaten, such persons consider that the end of the art has been attained. It is necessary to bear in mind that there are higher and better things in Painting than these small illusions; and we may repeat Sir Joshua Reynolds’ “advice to the con-

noisseurs, that when they see a cat or fiddle painted so finely, that, as the phrase is, *it looks as if you could take it up*, they would not for that reason immediately compare the painter to Raffaele and Michel Angelo." Still, the representation upon a flat surface of the varied effects of Nature, constituting as it does the chief specific characteristic of the art, must always be considered of great importance. In this translation the subtleties of form and the effects of distance can hardly fail to attract our attention, and their beauty may thus be more readily impressed upon our minds than by a more literal reproduction.

With all these restrictions, it is clear that the means of the art are more than sufficient for its requirements. That which it has most command over is colour. It can only offer pigments for light, and flat drawing for solidity; but a painting may at least be a *coloured thing*. And yet this is the very quality which the art most frequently dispenses with; and it is found that in etching, engraving, and the like, many if not most of its principal effects can be produced in simple black and white. And as, in all Art, what is wanted is not so much an exact and literal reproduction of external facts as, in a sense, an interpretation of them, or of some characteristics of them, bringing out not only the material, but also the mental and moral, aspects of them, so here it is unnecessary for the artist to encumber himself with more than he cares to illustrate. Flaxman put aside both chiaroscuro and colour, finding mere outlines, without even the simplest

light and shade, sufficient for the conveyance of his ideas. In the same way, Painting, when its full means are available, may often be rightly restricted in some respects. The artist who has a grand subject to represent may not care to devote himself to petty details. He will endeavour, above all things, to get thought and character and dignity into his work, and will very likely content himself with merely indicating the minor matters of solidity and the like, leaving them to be completed by the spectator's imagination. Hence the greatest masters of the art so frequently chose to work in fresco, exhibiting therein a breadth and generalised treatment, both of form and colour, such as to raise the mind at once above the idea of deceptive representation. It was this desire for simple conditions, and scorn of mere imitative details, which gave rise to the oft-quoted remark of Michel Angelo, that oil-painting was an occupation fit only for women and children.

It is, indeed, undesirable in all ways that the artist should do everything for us. There should ever be room for our own imagination to be at work. Turner's pictures would be none the better for a more exact elaboration of form, just as "Hamlet" would not have been improved if Shakspeare had told us plainly whether the prince was really mad or sane, which is a matter for discussion to this day. If the artist does but give us some earnest, living thought, which we may expand and develop for ourselves, that is the great thing.

How, then, may the mechanical means of Painting

—various, far-reaching, and yet limited, as we have seen them to be—be so employed as to produce poetical, that is to say, imaginative results? Poetry must appeal to us in one of two ways; either as the exponent of Beauty and material Grandeur, or as the interpreter of thoughts, passions, and emotions. In the former case it may be either purely æsthetic, and so touch only the fancy, or it may, in awaking ideas of material loveliness, arouse also corresponding ideas of moral excellence, and lift the heart to a region of better things. The physical beauty of this world may well cause us to look forward more earnestly to its ultimate purification from the taint of evil. At any rate, whether in this somewhat uncertain region, or in the more definite sphere of the direct expression of character and emotion, the artist must work by means of external qualities, and in these themselves we may first look for evidences of poetical feeling.

From what has been said above, it will be seen that to show forth the full æsthetic value of form, light, and colour requires not only appreciation of natural beauties, not only perception of their value, nor even of the conditions of their manifestation, but also knowledge how to give them out again in a new language, with new materials and under new conditions. The painter, with his imperfect means, can compete successfully with Nature only when those means are made the most of. The effects which he can produce are not so striking; but then he can bring them into relative prominence, and remove rival attractions. Hence the pictures which those who are not artists take for the most part to be the exact

copies of actual facts of Nature, are, in reality, the results of elaborate convention and the systematic substitution of one thing for another.

Not only is it necessary for the individual forms in a painting to be instinct with expression, but such a disposition of those forms must be made with regard to the whole scene that their significance may be more readily and accurately conveyed. For example, in the pursuit of our ordinary avocations, we may chance to see a crowd assembled at the corner of a street. It is merely a number of people, of whom the passer-by sees little but the backs. Perhaps curiosity tempts us to inquire what it is all about. The majority of the crowd don't know themselves; they are pushing and elbowing each other in the effort to find out. And it is only with some patience, a good deal of squeezing, and great perseverance that we can finally ascertain whether a starving woman has fallen down in a fainting-fit, or a policeman is arguing with a refractory street-mendicant, or an ingenious itinerant artist has represented on the pavement one of those surprising pieces of ideal scenery, consisting of a couple of ships in full sail, surrounded by a piece of cheese, a pocket-knife, and half an orange. Now it is perfectly clear that this condition of uncertainty would not do in a picture. We must, above all things, be able to see clearly what is going on, and even crowds must be disposed accordingly. Nor is this all that is required. Ordinary observers are frequently unconscious of the artifices by which their attention is drawn to the most important figure, and impressiveness given to the leading incident of the

scene. They are free to look where they like, but some intensity of light, some point of colour, or some direction of leading lines, inevitably attracts their gaze to one particular spot, just as in the trick known to conjurors as "forcing a card," the whole of the pack seems to be offered for choice, and the cards are spread and shifted apparently at random, yet there is one particular card always presented to the person who is asked to draw. In Gustave Doré's picture of "Christ leaving the Prætorium," the main intention is apparently to give prominence and dignity to the figure of Our Lord, and convey the idea of grandeur and sublimity even in His humiliation. Accordingly, not only has the artist rendered the figure conspicuous by means of a white robe contrasted with a prevalence of dark draperies, but he has made almost every leading line in the picture converge upon the same point. Wherever one begins to examine the painting, the eye is led along the various figures in the crowd to the central form, supreme amongst them all. Similarly, it often happens that a painter places in a prominent position in his picture some apparently insignificant object, which, by its play of curve, or some other quality, strikes, as it were, the key-note of the design, and imparts an energy of action to the whole. The effects of solidity and force are produced not only by the separate treatment of the parts, but also by the manner in which the principal light is placed, and how it is related to the principal shadow; how some of the one is carried into the other—as a dark tree jutting into the clear hues of the sky, or stretching out before the pale tints of distant hills.

In this and other ways the value of each feature is made apparent, so that the different objects seem to be actually occupying those places in the distance or the foreground which they are supposed to fill.

Colour, too, depends for its delightfulness upon its arrangement as well as upon its quality. Great colourists have, indeed, often obtained hues of exquisite intrinsic beauty, colours glowing with an "internal light," and possessing a softness, delicacy, and brilliancy which cannot fail to delight us; but the value of any colour may be enhanced or degraded by the mode in which it is combined with others. And the pleasure afforded by colour is, in great measure, if not altogether, independent of the forms with which it is associated. We may sometimes feel a picture to be rightly coloured, and to be truly beautiful, when the figures contained in it are ill drawn, or even unfinished and undecipherable,—as is sometimes the case in Turner's later works; just as a series of musical harmonies may be delightful, though set to no regular words nor conveying any definite and tangible meaning.* As soon as colours are com-

* The correspondence between the phenomena of Music and some features of pictorial art is too obvious to escape attention, and the sense of it is shown by the frequent interchange of many of the terms proper to the two arts. It is, of course, easy to render this ridiculous by carrying it to excess, and the "able editors" of the "Saturday Review" are continually making merry with instances of the kind. Yet they themselves speak of the "colouring" of a description, of "vignettes touched off in a line or two" (of words), of "the right system of *harmonious* colouring," and so forth, which are all cases of using a term applicable to one art for the purpose of describing another. It is one thing to talk, like "Punch's" chorus of ladies, about "perspective in *crescendoes*," "chiaroscuro in *diminuendoes*," and "roundness of modelling in

bined for artistic purposes, it will be found that they are not only harmonious or discordant, but that they affect very materially each other's intrinsic qualities. So much is this the case that some writers have declared all colour to be relative, every tint added to a picture altering all the rest. This arises from the fact that the sensibility of the eye to any colour is temporarily reduced whenever the sensation of that colour has been excited. Thus, if we look fixedly at a bright green object for a short time, we shall, on looking away from it to other things, be unable for a few moments to receive fully further impressions of green. Thus on a white or gray object we shall see a pink spot, on a yellow object a red one, and so on; because white consists of red, green, and blue, if, therefore, the sensibility of the eye to *green* is impaired, when we look at a white or gray* object we shall only

pianissimos," and quite another to speak of the light and shade of a sonata, or of a high or low key of colour. The use of tropes is perfectly legitimate within due limits, and their employment is evidence of a certain correspondence between the subjects with which the old and new meanings of the words are concerned. This correspondence in the case of sound and colour is a very close one. Each acts by purely physical means; each is capable of producing pleasure or pain by its action upon a single sense; and in each case the result may be due to intrinsic qualities, or combinations, or progressions. We therefore speak of the *tone* of a picture just as we do of the tone of a musical instrument, and a disagreement between two colours is expressed by saying they are *discordant*, exactly as if they were two sounds. It will be seen, moreover, that the influence of colour upon the mind is precisely similar to, though infinitely less powerful than, that of music; that its functions in Art are concerned with what is pleasant and beautiful only; but that, just as music may be subdued into the touching plaintiveness of a minor key, so a painter like Ruysdael may paint with a melancholy brush, and give out all his colour-harmonies in grave and mournful strains.

* *Gray* is here used in its optical sense to signify partial white light;

see the red and the blue—*i.e.*, pink. Yellow consists of red and green: if, then, we cannot see the green, we shall only be conscious of the red. Every colour, therefore, seems to subtract some of its own hue from other colours which surround it. The colours used by the painter are practically never quite pure; even his reds, greens, and blues do not correspond exactly with the prismatic colours; and besides this, all light colours owe their lightness to their being diluted with white light, so that there is plenty of room for the exercise of a modifying influence. A brilliant yellow, for example, subtracts yellow—that is to say, red and green—from the hues around it, and therefore makes blue seem deeper than it really is, because it takes away some of the red and green from the white light with which it is diluted, leaving more blue to reinforce that which is already in excess. So, blue makes a neighbouring pink appear red, and white makes all colours near it seem darker by taking away some of the white which dilutes them.

It will thus be seen, in some degree, why it is that combinations of colours are capable of striking us with so keen a sense of beauty or of the reverse, and how important such colour-art becomes from a simply æsthetic point of view. Colour, too, has its place in the composition. Just as the light and shade may be used as foils to one another, and yet must be so disposed as to preserve a unity and completeness in

that is to say, gray is produced when some of each of the component colours reach the eye, but not all. It is, so to speak, white light *diluted* with darkness. Painters use the term "gray" to signify almost any indeterminate colour.

the general effect, so in a fine painting the colours will not be altogether scattered about in spots, but the cool blues and greens will be so placed in regard to the warm reds and yellows and browns that the broad relations of the whole will be harmonious; and at the same time the prevailing tints of one part will be so carried into the other that one-sidedness and patchiness of effect may be avoided. As an example of this, Sir Joshua Reynolds quotes Titian's "*Bacchus and Ariadne*," in which the principal group consists almost entirely of warm colours. On the other side of the picture is Ariadne, who is dressed in blue, and stands against blue sea and sky. To avoid the obvious division of the painting into two parts, Ariadne wears a red scarf, and some blue is introduced among the figures on the other side.

It will be seen that colour offers a very wide field of study, and that it is not by any means so simple a matter as might at first be supposed. It will also appear that excellence as a colourist does not consist simply in a habit of laying on bright and glaring pigments—a fact which is worthy of notice in view of the practice of many painters of our modern English school, who are supposed to have made colour their especial study. The colours of the Venetians were indeed brilliant, but they were also tender and soft; and the mastery of a great colourist is shown, not only in this subtle matter of quality, but also, and chiefly, in his power of arranging and harmonising his materials. This may be displayed in the case of pale and delicate hues as well as with richer and more gaudy ones. Artists of the French school in

very many cases choose to "lower the key" of Nature altogether, and, without attempting to make their art compete with her, deal with such gradations and contrasts as a more modest scale of colour allows. Something analogous to this was done by the Dutch landscape-painters. Ruysdael, Hobbema, and others painted almost entirely with subdued colours. Without asserting for a moment that such voluntary restriction is desirable in all, or even in most, cases, the style may be quoted as proving that Beauty may be often won when wooed in simple and unpretending guise. There are in the works of some of the best modern French colourists a sober richness and thoroughness of artistic feeling which are not readily to be met with elsewhere.

On the other hand, we may at once concede that, considered æsthetically, brilliant colouring is very desirable, *when it is good*. As long as it is understood that brilliancy and goodness are not necessarily synonymous, such a principle will do no harm.

On the value of colour as an element of Beauty, it is hardly necessary to enlarge. Surely it is not without reason that the trees are clothed with varying green, and the flowers are flushed or dim with every lovely tint. Think what we should lose if the morning rose into a white sky, and the sun sank amid clouds of pallid gray! And the subtle influence of colour is as powerful with regard to the sentiment as to the mechanical qualities of the art. Now it gives a sombre and melancholy expression, as in Ruysdael's waterfalls, or the chill gloom of the "Burial of Wilkie." Now it imparts a sense of sober

quiet and cheerfulness, as in the clear skies of Claude. Now it rises in intensity of feeling through the warm summer heat of the Campagna in Turner's "Apollo and Daphne," to the solemn sunset in the "Fighting Téméraire," sprinkling the shattered clouds with drops of burning blood and sheeting the ocean with a lurid flame.

In judging of the æsthetic merits of a picture as a whole, it should always be borne in mind that different conditions exact different styles, and that the same method of treatment is not suitable under all circumstances. In every case the nature of the end proposed by the artist should be considered. Clearly, it would not be fair or wise to object to the style of Meissonier that it is not so grand as that of Raffaele's Cartoons. The mode of treatment suitable to a picture of very small dimensions, which will be consequently closely scanned, is manifestly very different from that appropriate to one intended to be seen from a moderate distance. Still less would it accord with the style of a work designed for the decoration of a large building, and thus always expected to be viewed from a comparatively remote position. Each art, and each different style of art, will be found to have a greater power of expressing certain qualities and ideas than is possessed by other arts and styles; and, consequently, the highest merit belongs to those works in which the best use is made of the special characteristics proper to the kind of treatment employed. The full strength of the art will not be felt if it is merely used to convey what might be as

well, or better, conveyed by other means.* Size and intended position, therefore, are of great moment in deciding both the choice of a subject and the manner of rendering it. The Dutch school attained its popularity, in spite of a general neglect of character and of all mental and moral qualities, simply by great perfection in the mechanical part of Painting, and by offering excellence in composition, colour, and chiaroscuro, as a compensation for the absence of expression. The achievements of the school in this respect were very great, and are held in deserved esteem, though the merit attaching to them is very different from that of the great Roman and Florentine schools, whose masters thought of light and colour and form chiefly as means of expressing the thoughts of great minds and the emotions of pure and noble hearts. But it is to be noted that the practice of the Dutch painters would, in a purely æsthetic point of view, be unsuitable if applied to works of large proportions. Broad relations of form and colour are necessary to unite a large work into a connected whole. To break up its treatment into small parts would distract the attention, and no great effect could be produced. It is true that breadth is also necessary in small pictures, but such works admit of an elaboration of details which would be startling and unpleasant in paintings of considerable size.

It must be remembered that truth may exist apart from absolute realism. That is to say, it may be true, but not the whole truth. A good sketch is a

* See Sir Charles Eastlake "On the Criterion of Specific Style."

better thing than a badly-finished picture. An artist may give us such characteristics of his subject as he chooses, abstracting some and passing the others by, and so long as what he gives us is excellent as far as it goes, we have no right to complain. Such abstraction is very valuable in purely decorative art, in works which are intended to be beautiful rather than expressive. The artist may often with advantage call our attention to some few features of loveliness, rather than by an attempt at general realism lose them in the mere attractiveness of pictorial deception. Some quiet theme of colour, some tender grace of form, some play of subtle curves, some pleasant grouping of figures, will be most useful in bringing about the desired result. The painting will then be taken for what it is intended to be, something not didactic nor historical, in the usual sense of those terms, but simply something pleasant to the eye, and yet instinct with a beauty which, if taken from Nature's stores, will not be without its elevating influence.

For Art which is worthy of the name, if it do no more than offer pleasures to the senses, will do so, not as the ape of Nature, but rather as her interpreter. good decorative art is not merely beautiful in itself, but, if we understand it rightly, it is an attempt to unfold to us some of the glories of this world of ours, upon which, however sin and sorrow stricken it may be, the light of Heaven still shines and the air of Heaven still breathes. We, in our ignorance and blindness, pass these beauties by; we look at them and see them not. Full of our own schemes and struggles and ambitions, we have no room in our hearts

for the relics of Paradise which yet remain around us. And we too often seek our pleasure in any relief from toil, however meagre may be its accompaniments of positive and rational delight—

"On listless dalliance bound,
Like children gazing round,
Who on God's works no seal of Godhead find,"

until some one comes to us with a truer knowledge and a clearer insight, and penetrating with his strong imaginative perception the outward covering of common appearances, brings out to our view the treasures of loveliness lying all unnoticed by us within. And if Art which merely aims at being decorative must (if it is good Art) be founded upon the principles and laws which rule in Nature's works, it will hardly fail to show us a special light in which the original source of it has presented itself to the mind of the artist. As Mr Ruskin expresses it, the objects of Nature "receive the reflection of the mind under whose shadow they have passed, and are modified or coloured by its image." This is only asserted by him with regard to "any *great* work of art;" but it would not be difficult to prove, from what has been advanced respecting the necessary imperfections of Painting as a mode of transcript, that only some aspects of Nature can be presented at one time—that a sort of selection must be made of the effects to be reproduced, and that this process of separation and choice must involve a certain mental impress being stamped upon the work in every case. And it would be equally easy to show, by a reference to the productions of landscape-painters and decor-

ative artists of all ages, that, as a matter of fact, this individuality has always characterised work of the kind. The landscapes that "savage Rosa dashed," when compared with the quiet scenes chosen for illustration by Cuyp or Crome, suggest not only a difference in method, but also a divergence of feeling, a totally different sphere of thought, and even of moral tendency. The value of the result depends in great measure upon the character of the man. The eyes of a great artist see much further, and his feelings are more intense, than those of ordinary observers; and paintings by such a man will teach us, if we care to learn, how to see Nature much more clearly, and to unravel its marvellous complexity much more thoroughly, than we have ever done before. Thus the simplest subjects may become beautiful in a painter's hands—not indeed when they are used merely to show off his skill and knowledge of technical treatment, but when he loves them, and finding in them so much to study and admire, sets down such of his impressions as he can, both to preserve them for himself and to convey them to others.

And, further, by means of a true perception of what is essential in Nature's works—of what is typical as distinguished from what is accidental and imperfect—a great artist may display in his works something of an ideal perfection which in the works of Nature, as we see them around us, is not usually attained. Art can never be so beautiful as Nature, but it may at times bring together such versions as it can offer of different excellences which in Nature are usually found apart. A statue is not so beautiful

as a man, for it has no power of movement to throw its graces into a thousand changing forms, no life to give them, one and all, expression; but its single, rigid, lifeless shape may display a greater combination of delicacies of contour and exquisite proportions than could be found in any individual living human being. A painted landscape is inferior in light and colour, in complexity and variety, to a real one, but in it may be shown different features of rock and sky which we might never be fortunate enough to find presented to us at once in Nature. Sir Joshua Reynolds says, "The terms Beauty or Nature, which are general ideas, are but different modes of expressing the same thing, whether we apply these terms to statues, poetry, or pictures;" but he adds, "Deformity is not Nature, but an accidental deviation from her accustomed practice. This *general idea* therefore ought to be called Nature; and nothing else, correctly speaking, has a right to that name." So that, as he previously says, "The beginning, the middle, and the end of everything that is valuable in taste is comprised in *the knowledge of what is truly Nature.*"* Art, then, may in one sense surpass particular productions of Nature, but only by leading us more surely to the understanding of her general principles, and by following out to undisturbed fulfilment the universal methods of her working. Thus an intellectual element is introduced into the representation of even inanimate nature, and thus a certain sentiment may be infused into it, bringing it into a kind of sympathy with ourselves. All truly great

* Seventh Discourse.

painters are alike in their intense appreciation of the exquisite beauty which lives in common things. A mere weed, a wild flower, a country road, a meadow, is to them full of charm: but this is not all. For them the heavens *rejoice* and the earth is glad, the floods clap their hands and the hills are joyful together, and the whole universe is seen to be no blind congeries of lifeless matter, but the "living garment" of an all-pervading, though invisible, spirit.

Midway between inanimate nature and the strong mental and emotional humanity which forms the crowning object of the artist's study, there lies the wide and interesting field of brute-nature. Just as man in his nobler qualities exhibits traces of a likeness to a Higher Being, so do the lower animals display at times the elements of a moral character not altogether dissimilar to our own. The capacity for pleasure and pain, the memory, the intelligence of animals are only inferior examples of qualities upon which we habitually pride ourselves. Animals, too, display fidelity and affection, not only to their own kind, but to their human masters, and in this respect not unfrequently put the latter to shame. What, then, has been said above as to the value and interest of the study of inanimate nature, may be said still more strongly with regard to that of animals. In them our feelings may be stirred, not by physical perfections only, but also by moral qualities, which, in a higher development, lie at the root of our own essential being. This expression in animal-painting is, of course, most valuable when it is most strictly founded upon the true facts of

brute-nature. Rosa Bonheur has shown how the strength, and grace, and dignity of animals may be expressed in Art; Landseer has also given us an insight into their more pathetic and humorous characteristics. But the latter, though the more imaginative artist of the two, often approached too closely to the boundary-line which divides legitimate exaggeration from caricature. No dog *smiles* like the glossy-coated spaniel in the "Alexander and Diogenes." No dog wears the expression given either to the canine monarch or philosopher, and the supercilious *hauteur* of the hound-footmen is still less doggish. The "Sleeping Bloodhound" *is* a hound, and not a human being in a dog's skin, and the Art of it is better and more thoroughly poetical, because the account it gives is truer, not only of the grandeur of the animal's vigorous and supple frame, but also of the real characteristics of his noble nature.

Another step conducts us from the portraiture of brute animals to that of men, and here, once again, the power of the artist's mind displays itself. One painter gives the outward features much in the same way that a photographic camera does,—correctly and mechanically. Another seizes at once upon the character and spirit of the man. Some people cannot understand why a large photograph coloured up to simulate a genuine painting is yet never felt to be so good a thing. The reason is, that there is no mind in it, no keen perceptive faculty at work, no power in the machine to separate what is essential from what is accidental, transient, and unimportant. And the artist whose powers go no further than the exact repre-

sensation of distinguishing features and prominent marks of individuality, though his works will not fail to be generally recognised as "likenesses," will never produce a picture of more than local and temporary interest. These special lineaments are indeed to be attended to. Lessing says truly that "although a portrait admits of the ideal, this last must be subordinate to the likeness; it is the ideal of an individual man, and not the ideal of man in the abstract." But the "ideal" in any form is something more than the transcript of physical features. The object of the portrait-painter is to give us *the man* as far as possible; but the true artist will not stay at the outside of him; he knows that the things which really constitute the man are not those which lie most openly upon the surface, and he will try to catch those fleeting gleams of expression which, however transient, are most truly characteristic, and reveal most of the soul within. Examples of the lower mode of treatment are unhappily common enough in our Art-Exhibitions, but the higher method is fortunately also shown at the present day in the works of such men as Mr Watts and Mr Oules.*

But the most important in the range of subjects of pictorial art, and those which have attracted the largest share of the attention of its greatest masters, are those which treat directly of the deeds and the passions of men. The representation of historical

* Mr Millais can also approach portrait-painting from this nobler side when he chooses, but the recklessness of popularity, or some other cause, makes him too frequently prefer to give us merely startling ladies in flaring chintz dresses, and simpering damsels with a hectic flush upon their cheeks.

events must always involve the presentation, in some degree, of the artist's opinion of the events and the conduct of those concerned in them; but even in the rendering of the simplest scenes of rustic labour or mirth, in the presentation of human life under its most ordinary and commonplace conditions, something of this appreciation of character is involved. Every circumstance of our lives, however trivial, is either honourable or degrading; our commonest occupations may become ennobled by their usefulness, the homeliest manners may acquire dignity by unaffected honesty and naturalness; and the simplest transactions between man and man seldom fail to possess an interest which extends beyond the immediate place and moment of their occurrence. Men are so bound up with each other that the story even of obscure lives is not often without its significance. And of all studies, that of the human mind and heart is the most difficult, the most exhaustless, the most fascinating, and the most valuable. Of whatever rank, exalted or humble, of whatever powers, brilliant or dull, in whatever circumstances, prosperous or needy, however influential or however despised, each man carries about with him a nature in which all may find features typical of their own—some one touch, if only one, which makes the whole world kin to him; and in tracing out such characteristics every one may find an interest, and, if he chooses, profit also. So great is this delight in the analysis of human character at all times, that evil may prove attractive in Art, if only it is connected with the passions of men. Let it be human, and its noxiousness will not prevent its being interesting. The danger

which lies in this has been already pointed out, and it has to be specially guarded against in Painting, where, from the great variety of its resources, a subject may be presented in a pleasing way even though it is in itself abhorrent to good feeling and good taste. Particular deformity may be made an element of general beauty; folly and sensuality may be disguised by gaiety, and still more by technical and æsthetic excellences,

In historical Painting, and in the branches of the art which aim, not at individual portraiture, but at the representation of typical character, the great principles which regulate the estimation of all thought and sentiment will obviously be applicable. An idea which we should consider valuable in a poem or an essay is of equal importance when conveyed through a picture. A sentiment which we should put aside as paltry in ordinary intercourse with our fellows acquires no dignity by being presented in the form of Art; it rather becomes additionally mischievous, because it may receive a certain power of attraction from its connection with technical merit. And it cannot be asserted with too much emphasis that no mechanical beauties can ever atone for moral deformity. It is all the worse when the powers are great which are employed on the side of evil; and the argument which seeks to excuse foolish or vicious sentiment in Art on the score of the technical abilities of the artist, would serve also to excuse a theft or any other social crime when effected with great ingenuity. The great mischief of directing the attention exclusively to the technical side of Art, which is so often

characteristic of artists and connoisseurs, is that an essentially unhealthy work may acquire a certain status and reputation by virtue of its technical quality, and that people may be led away by its varied sensuous attractions, and receive a taint from contact with its moral impurity—a taint which is all the more permanent and deadly when the painter possesses the art of arresting the attention and powerfully impressing the imagination. The mastery of light and shade, colour and composition, possessed by Teniers, only served to render his inherent sottishness more hurtful in its influence. It made it possible for him to give a factitious interest to drunkenness and gambling, and all the lowest and most pitiful passions of fallen humanity. Such things should be dealt with only that they may be more effectually shunned; it can serve no good purpose to trick them out in an attractive dress, and to make them the theme of works whose object is to be admired.

Unfortunately, people are too often content to accept the thought, as well as the technical qualities of a work of art, upon the general verdict of professional critics. They neglect to use their own judgment respecting the tone of moral feeling which pervades it, and of which they ought to be fully qualified to judge; and they allow its influence to grow upon them, even when it is of a character which, under other circumstances, they would readily avoid. Thus the meaning and expression of Art, which are the very things that most thoroughly and durably impress the mind, are allowed to present any character of weakness or morbidity without their unhealthiness being

perceived. At any rate, the weakest sentimentality is allowed to pass current. The immense popularity of M. Gustave Doré is probably in a great measure due, to the fact that the expression of his works is extremely obvious, and can be perceived with very little trouble. This artist gives us a blue and gray moonlight scene in a Roman Amphitheatre, suggestive of the last scene of an opera, with some wild beasts devouring the bodies of men who have been cast to them, a number of exceedingly melodramatic angels appearing in the air above; and this not very profound piece of sentiment is sufficient to excite rapturous delight on the part of most of the visitors to M. Doré's gallery.

We cannot, of course, for the most part, expect to effect any great reforms in these matters by our personal influence, but we may at least keep our own tastes pure. The tone of feeling which pervades a nation's Art will naturally be in some degree a reflection of that which characterises the national life, and in the long-run the one can only be improved by raising the other. The popular French Art of the present day, with its sickly men and women, engaged in the frivolities, and exhibiting the hysterical passions, of an altogether artificial mode of existence, is the normal outcome of the actual conditions of French society; and upon these we may have no influence; but our own individual feeling in such matters may at least be improved by a determination to allow no material attractions to lead us into approbation of what is evil, or delight in mere vapidty and folly.

The highest result in Art will obviously be obtained by a union of technical excellence with noble and exalted sentiment ; and this is the combination which the greatest schools of Art have always laboured to effect. The original idea of Painting and all similar arts was unquestionably imitation. In the case of historical and genre painting, a very great part of the pleasure conveyed is due to the tangible realisation of the scene. We usually find some difficulty in imagining for ourselves what historical personages and their actions really looked like. The artist therefore shows us his idea of them. So, also, though we have our notions of the dignity, or the grace, or the comicality, of different characteristics of individual or social life, they are for the most part very vague ones, and we are always disposed to feel pleasure when some definite ideas on the subject are placed before us. This is the source of the general popularity of pictorial art, and its use is by no means to be despised. Indeed, the object of the artist must in all cases be some form of realism, the difference being between the things which it is attempted to realise. In the first instance, the artist set himself merely to reproduce the external appearance of objects. As he found more in them, he aimed at a closer resemblance ; and whenever the feeling of the spirit and soul in them became dominant in his mind, it appeared naturally through the physical characteristics in his art also. Still in all ages, the aspect of Art as involving imitative skill and technical learning has been inevitably a prominent one. And the early painters, being simple-minded men, made no kind of effort to

conceal this, and scrupled not to combine with such expression as they could give to their religious feelings evidences of their labour and manual dexterity, thinking, no doubt, that the best and most practical way of honouring religion was to consecrate the best of their powers to its service. Crivelli was evidently fond of painting fruit, and was doubtless considered to excel in that branch of Art ; accordingly he introduced fruit on every available occasion, whether the subject was the Annunciation or the Madonna Enthroned, or what not ; and his feeling was surely right, that if the *picture* was improved from an æsthetic point of view by the introduction of such accessories, then it was well that even such subjects should be adorned and enriched with them.

The best condition of Art undoubtedly is that the artist should first of all have something great and noble to say, and then should set about expressing it in the most perfect and admirable manner possible. The modern "Pre-Raffaellite" school set this object of patient and careful work clearly before themselves. The works of Mr Holman Hunt, for example, are instances of the most elaborate and minute realism, combined with great dignity of expression. Opinions differ as to the actual success of his method, in the matter of naturalness. Certainly, as regards giving the *effect* of objects rather than the objects themselves, a less hard and defined manner would be preferable.* Still, there can be no question as to the

* The objection to Mr Holman Hunt's treatment is not that it is too realistic, but that it is not realistic enough ; that the outlines of objects are much softer, the general appearance much less sharp, and the details much less clear, in Nature than as rendered in his pictures.

pains taken with every detail and accessory ; and what is of importance here to note is the enthusiasm which induced the artist to journey to Bethlehem and Nazareth in order to paint his picture, "The Shadow of Death," under the most favourable circumstances, and which impelled him to elaborate with so much care and completeness a work which is nevertheless in the highest degree imaginative and ideal. It proves, at least, that the closest attention to the mechanical department of Art (whether we agree with this particular development of it or not) is in no way inconsistent with the expression of exalted thought.

So also the works of such men as Raffaele and Michel Angelo, while as far as possible removed from the style just referred to, are not only full of thought and feeling of the highest order, but exhibit technical qualities which have served as models for all succeeding artists. They did not, indeed, always aim at material realism, but they did always aim at material dignity and beauty. If there is any incompatibility between the intellectual and the æsthetic perfection of a painting, there can be no question as to which should be sacrificed ; but the works of those who by common consent hold the first position in this department of Art are as admirable in the one respect as they are in the other.

Such are some of the aspects of this great and important art of Painting. Its influence over those to whom it is addressed is too often insignificant, because they fail to recognise it as a mode of expression, and treat it merely as an ingenious source

of pleasant temporary illusion. If we are to gain any great good from it, we must learn to regard it as a means of seeing with other eyes than our own ; and not only so, but as helping us in seeing with our bodily eyes to see with those of the spirit also ; as opening to us the book of Nature, and analysing the hearts and minds of men ; and as an art which may not only gratify our senses, but, by using one of them as an inlet to the soul, may also discipline our feelings, and instruct our understandings.

CHAPTER V.

VERBAL POETRY.

WE have examined successively those various forms of Poetry which are concerned with special kinds of material and spiritual phenomena. We now come to the consideration of the art which embraces the whole and which conveys its ideas without having recourse to any peculiar external medium, but uses the common means whereby men naturally communicate their thoughts to one another. We shall see that, by this employment of language, it possesses a freedom and capacity for expression which render its scope co-extensive with that of the human mind.

The characteristics of Poetry and of the poet, in this restricted sense of those terms,* have been very variously defined by different thinkers. Some regard Poetry as acting by the production of vivid mental impressions of the ideas it illustrates, and images of the objects it describes. They therefore affirm that it is essentially particular, clear, and definite. Thus

* The word "Poetry" will be used throughout this chapter, except when specially otherwise stated, in this restricted sense, *i.e.*, as "*Verbal Poetry*," and not, as hitherto, in its wider signification as the essential characteristic of all the arts.

Macaulay says, "Generalisation is necessary to the advancement of knowledge, but particularity is indispensable to the creations of the imagination." Words, he asserts, are the materials which the poet "is to dispose in such a manner as to present a picture to the mental eye. And if they are not so disposed, they are no more entitled to be called poetry than a bale of canvas and a box of colours to be called a painting."* Others, regarding Poetry from a metaphysical and introspective point of view, recognise its particularity, but they look less at what it includes than at what it excludes. They point out that, in displaying particular truths or aspects of truth, it of necessity puts on one side other facts and features which practically tend to modify the conclusions to be derived from them. Thus the poet in Smith's "Thorndale" exclaims: "I could not write prose, if by prose you mean a didactic expression of settled, systematic opinions. I have no systematic opinions. It is not that in general I am indisposed to believe, but one belief destroys another. *There are too many truths.* And there are truths of negation as well as affirmation. I cannot help it. There are some subjects on which the more I read, and the more I think, the more bewildered I become. To me it seems that our world is veritable poetry—suits admirably, and suits only,

* Essay on Milton. Macaulay stated in the preface to his collected Essays, that the criticism on Milton contained "scarcely a paragraph such as his matured judgment approved;" but this apparently referred to the *style*, which he pronounced to be "overloaded with gaudy and ungraceful ornament." The view of Poetry referred to above is confirmed by the Essay on Byron, where the art is spoken of as "essentially imitative."

the poet's verse; for there are things most beautiful and grand in it, and these individually may be faithfully reflected in the poem." Viewed in this way, Poetry is no lamp illuminating the darkness of life, but only a fitful phosphorescent gleam, displaying the beauty of objects here and there, but leaving the spectator in his former confusion and bewilderment as to his whereabouts.

Others take a directly opposite view. They insist strongly upon the originality which characterises the poet, and they profess to recognise in him the true pioneer of the progress of humanity. The beams of his torch, they say, if they fail to irradiate the whole scene, are at least always thrown ahead; and if the light he furnishes is but feeble, it, alone, serves to point out in any degree the nature of the track to be pursued. Thus, Shelley would refer all the intellectual and moral progress which the world has yet made to the influence of Poetry—to the pursuit of the ideal. He says of the present age, "We have more moral, political, and historical wisdom than we know how to reduce into practice. The poetry in these systems of thought is concealed by the accumulation of facts and calculating processes. We want the creative faculty to imagine that which we know; we want the generous impulse to act upon that which we imagine; we want the poetry of life." Again, Dr Newman rejects entirely the theory either that Poetry is essentially inconclusive, or that it is essentially particular and definite. He says, "It delineates that perfection which the imagination suggests, and to which, as a limit, the present system of Divine Provi-

dence actually tends. Moreover, by confining the attention to one series of events and scene of action, it bounds and finishes off the confused luxuriance of real nature; while, by a skilful adjustment of circumstances, it brings into sight the connection of cause and effect, completes the dependence of the parts one on another, and harmonises the proportions of the whole." On the other hand, he adds, "It is called imaginative or creative, from the originality and independence of its modes of thinking, compared with the commonplace and matter-of-fact conceptions of ordinary minds, which are fettered down to the particular and individual." And he further remarks that a poet "will be obscure from the depth of his feelings, which require a congenial reader to enter into them—and from their acuteness, which shrinks from any formal accuracy in the expression of them."*

These different views of the nature of Poetry, contradictory as they may at first appear, are, in fact, all true. We have already seen that Poetry, in order to be Poetry, must involve the Imagination, that is to say, the colouring of the individual mind through whose action it is produced. It varies therefore with the variations of human character. It may be shown in the intense perception of the essential nature of things, or the illustration of that nature by means of analogies. It may content itself with simple facts, or it may be eager to apprehend tendencies. It may rejoice to seize upon certainty and completion, or it may sorrowfully explore the wilderness of doubt and imperfection.

* Essay on "Poetry, with Reference to Aristotle's Poetics."

It fails not to weave a subtle web of sympathy around the least as well as the greatest circumstances of life, and around the common objects of Nature as well as the most stupendous manifestations of her power and her magnificence. We speak truly if we say that Poetry may be in the highest degree definite. Nothing can be more intensely individual, and elaborate in detail, than some of the creations of Dante. The river of blood, the rain of fire, the sea of ice, the giants, the centaurs, the Count Ugolino gnawing the head of his murderer,—all are drawn with the sharpest outlines, and painted in the most vivid colours. We may with equal truth say that Poetry may be vague, and by this very vagueness reach the truth most surely:—

“As sometimes in a dead man’s face,
To those that watch it more and more,
A likeness, hardly seen before,
Comes out—to some one of his race :

“So, dearest, now thy brows are cold,
I see thee what thou art, and know
Thy likeness to the wise below,
Thy kindred with the great of old.

“*But there is more than I can see,
And what I see I leave unsaid
Nor speak it, knowing Death has made
His darkness beautiful with thee.*” *

In the same way, Poetry may contain the true record of the poet’s deliberate opinions, or may only reflect a single aspect of a question which has presented itself to his mind in many diverse forms.

* Tennyson, “In Memoriam,” 74.

It appears from Mrs Shelley's preface to her husband's essays and letters that he was a disciple of the Immaterial Philosophy of Berkeley. Thus, the concluding stanzas of "The Sensitive Plant" are no mere fanciful reverie, but the expression of sincere faith:—

" In this life
Of error, ignorance, and strife,
Where nothing is, but all things seem,
And we the shadows of the dream,—

" It is a modest creed, and yet
Pleasant, if one considers it,
To own that death itself must be,
Like all the rest, a mockery.

" That garden sweet, that lady fair,
And all sweet shapes and odours there
In truth have never passed away ;
'Tis we, 'tis ours are changed,—not they."

On the other hand, no one would attempt to fix upon Wordsworth any stigma of unorthodoxy on account of his ode on "Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood."

" Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting :
The soul that rises with us, our life's star,
Hath had elsewhere its setting,
And cometh from afar."

The poet did not mean this to be taken literally. It was an intense way of stating the fact that the human soul, whose greatness he was insisting upon, had been created by God, and created in some degree of likeness to His own spiritual nature. It would not do to quote the passage in support of the Platonic doctrine of reminiscence of a previous state

of existence. It is, in fact, a passionate apprehension of the gleam of God's likeness which is all too faintly to be perceived shining out from our fallen humanity. Wordsworth did not fail to appreciate the gloomy significance of the rest of the picture.

" Great God ! I'd rather be
A pagan, suckled in a creed outworn,"

is his cry, when the darker facts of life strike him more forcibly. Poetry is the expression of the feelings of one who feels keenly. The things which of themselves awaken no emotion in another touch him deeply, and he has the secret of affecting others with them. These things are sometimes mere fragments. No matter, he can found a poem on them. They have reached his heart. There is some element of truth in them, and he is impelled to bring it out to view. It is not the whole truth ; it will not solve all difficulties, nor dispel all doubts. Still, it is worth having. He prizes it, just as a prisoner prizes a chink in his dungeon, through which now and again a breath of fresh and scented air strays in to him, though he cannot tell from what fields and gardens that breath derives its fragrance. The poet knows no restraint except that prescribed by the limits of his own sympathy. He does not stop to argue. He finds himself in a marvellous world of grace and splendour and love, and he is content to give himself up to the happiness of his sensations. And when his delight is foiled by the presence of dark stains of sin and shadows of sorrow, his horror, his indignation, his pity spring up no less spontaneously than his joy

does at another time. It is no part of his business to construct general formulæ and fashion theories about the difficulties and evils of life. He only professes to show the things which he has found, and to say what he feels about them. Others may reduce them to systems, if they can and will; it is not within his province to do so.

This being so, it is manifestly impossible to reduce Poetry itself to anything like a system. It would be obviously absurd to attempt to lay down any rules as to what a man is to think, or what emotions he is to experience. But these impressions and emotions are the very foundation of Poetry; and to say that a poem shall be subservient to any particular code of laws, is to say that, so far, it shall not be a poem at all. The results of endeavouring to systematise Poetry have been often practically exemplified. Addison's "Cato" is the culmination of the method, and it is the source whence nearly every writer on Poetry, during the present century, has drawn his chief examples of what Poetry should *not* be. Poetry derives its value from being the faithful reflection of a human mind. Hence it arises that primitive conditions of society are the most favourable to Poetry. As civilisation advances, our knowledge becomes more systematised, and the impulse of individual feeling is more restrained. To men just emerging from a savage state, every object in Nature is a source of wonder, and possesses a personal interest. They find everywhere around them life and progress; they are confronted by forces which they cannot control. Nor, if they would, can they

be indifferent to these things. The sun not only rises and sets, but it warms them and gives them needful light. And it affects them both directly and indirectly ; it ripens the corn and the fruit which serve them for food. So, the rain swells the stream whereof they drink, and makes to grow the grass whereof their cattle eat. Everywhere they perceive not only a vitality corresponding in some degree to their own, but also connecting-links of helpfulness and dependence between themselves and external things. Such men naturally find in everything a human interest, and attribute even to inanimate objects the characteristics of their own being. They know nothing about the laws of hydrostatics, and so the springing fountain is to them a thing of life, graceful and beneficent, and the waves of the sea rise, not with force merely, but with anger. Max Müller says of the early poets of the "Rig Veda," that they "thought more for themselves than for others. They sought rather in their language to be true to their own thought than to please the imagination of their hearers." *Prose*, indeed, as the same writer elsewhere remarks, was at that time simply unknown, and it was upon such ancient natural strains of thought that Poetry, as an art, was founded. Poetry, arising thus spontaneously, would naturally tend to become rhythmical. The power of sound in aiding expression would be speedily recognised, and its assistance sought in the endeavour to give utterance to the feelings struggling within the breast. Language would be modulated accordingly, and the art of Music would arise. Poetry, and the tendency to chant or sing or

solemn and important occasions, seem, from all accounts, to characterise savage and half-civilised tribes very generally. In circumstances of greater scientific knowledge, it is impossible that the facts of the world around us should arouse the same kind of personal feeling: we know so very much more about them. The dryads have for ever vanished from the trees, and the nymphs from the streams. The artificial modes of modern life throw us more into contact with our fellow-men, and make us seem less dependent upon the inanimate forces of Nature. Our poetry becomes, in consequence, more introspective, and very much more rare. The facts which our poets touch with their imagination are facts of mind and life, and the great elements of present and future existence, which, notwithstanding all our science, still remain obscure. If the external world moves us, it is more often in connection with these great mysteries than by virtue of its inherent characteristics. Our imagination is less simple, but it is also very much less vivid. But the Imagination, though employed about different objects, will yet avail to produce Poetry. It has been said that the greatest poetry is always necessarily spontaneous and impulsive. But it has been argued, on the other hand, that many great poets—Milton, for example—have been learned, and their learning has shone forth in their poems. It would seem, in fact, that the whole being and essence of a man's heart and intellect may flow out in Poetry. Whatever may be his mental culture, or however circumstances may have influenced his character, his poetry will be none the less truly Poetry, because it presents features

corresponding to the facts of his personal history, and the characteristics of the age in which he lives.

But for all this, Poetry certainly partakes very largely of the nature of an inspiration. The Imagination is most fully shown in an instinctive grasping of the truth, and an immediate and perfect appreciation of its nature. Thus, the greatest poets are often the simplest. And this power of perception gives the moral value to Poetry. The poet perceiving facts in their true nature, sees also their potential force, and thus is enabled to lead the way to new modes of thought and practice. This is the true creative power of Poetry. The poet may be said, in one sense, to create the human or superhuman characters which he introduces into his writings. They must be, indeed, compounded of elements which have an actual existence in the world. A centaur is, after all, only half a man and half a horse. A fallen angel is no more than a bad man with wings. But it is clear that there is something needed to make us believe in these combinations—to give them not merely consistency but life. Dante's Chiron and Milton's Satan are not mere compilations. The spirit has been breathed into them, and they are alive.

But this creative faculty is still more manifested in the origination of new forms of thought. Dante's punishment of *sadness* in the fifth Circle of Hell is a case in point :—

“ Underneath
The water dwells a multitude, whose sighs
Into these bubbles make the surface heave,
As thine eye tells thee wheresoe'er it turn.
Fixed in the slime, they say, ‘ Sad once were we

In the sweet air made gladsome by the sun,
Carrying a foul and lazy mist within ;
Now in these murky settlings are we sad.''' *

This is the true *ποίησις*. A winged horse, however finely it may be conceived, can never exist elsewhere than on paper ; but a thought like this, once embodied in the living words of a great poet, becomes a real force in the world, and will not fail to have its due effect upon the thoughts and deeds of men.

But of course Poetry, though in one sense above all laws, is yet not without its conditions. Whatever it does must be done by means of words, and words alone. It does not always happen that poetical feeling and the power to express it are found existing together. Many men have a deep appreciation of the beauty and grandeur of the world they live in, and a passionate consciousness of the solemn significance of life and death, to which they can give no articulate utterance. They have their ideals of manly virtue and womanly grace, which, however, they are quite unable to embody in definite human forms. They have, in short, abundance of poetical feeling, yet they are not poets. A poet of any kind is one in whom the Imagination does not remain vague and undefined, but assumes some external communicable form. His power of expression arises partly from the superior intensity of his feelings themselves, partly it is a separate gift. One man can most readily express himself on canvas ; another is impelled to dramatic action ; another can only discourse in music ; a fourth finds language best suited to his needs. His

* "Inferno," Canto vii., *Cory's translation*.

may not, perhaps, be a good talker—possibly better than Goldsmith—

“ Good-natured Noll,
Who wrote like an angel and talked like ‘poor Poll.’ ”

but when he has pen and paper before him, the right words seem to come to him at the right moment, and he can get what he wants to say well said.

A great (verbal) poet possesses in the highest degree this faculty of using language. To be limited to words is no restriction to him. We may, indeed regard Poetry as doing by means of words what the other arts do with their various methods and materials, and further, as expressing fully those facts of man's inner and spiritual being which other arts can but obscurely suggest. The poet cannot in a single moment show us a comprehensive scene, as a painter can, with its varied lights and shades and different actions and passions all displayed to view at once; but he does not feel this to be a disadvantage. He can express all of the scene that he wishes to express in another way, and then he has the advantage of influencing progressively those to whom he speaks. Where the painter can give one picture, he can give many. He is not confined to a single point of time, nor obliged to select one particular phase of an action. He can trace a whole chain of events, can awaken our interest in the future as well as the present, and bring the catastrophe upon us by slow degrees. The progressive character of his art causes his method of treating visible things to differ from that of the painter, but the tone of feeling characteristic of the

latter is not without means of expression in Poetry.
Here is a picture :—

“ He walked along the pathway of a field,
Which to the east a hoar wood shadowed o'er,
But to the west was open to the sky.
There now the sun had sunk, but lines of gold
Hung on the ashen clouds, and on the points
Of the far level grass and nodding flowers,
And the old dandelion's hoary beard,
And, mingled with the shades of twilight, lay
On the brown massy woods—and in the east
The broad and burning moon lingeringly rose
Between the black trunks of the crowded trees,
While the faint stars were gathering overhead.” *

Observe the exquisite chiaroscuro of the last three lines, and the delicate tinting of the whole scene.
Here is another fragment of colour :—

“ Beyond the shadow of the ship
I watch'd the water-snakes :
They moved in tracks of shining white,
And when they rear'd, the elfish light
Fell off in hoary flakes.

“ Within the shadow of the ship
I watch'd their rich attire :
Blue, glossy green, and velvet black,
They coil'd and swam ; and every track
Was a flash of golden fire.” †

Sometimes the poet chooses a neutral tint :—

“ The sky is overcast
With a continuous cloud, of texture close,
Heavy and wan, all whitened by the moon,
Which through that veil is indistinctly seen,

* Shelley, “The Sunset.”

† Coleridge, “Ancient Mariner.”

A dull, contracted circle, yielding light
 So feebly spread, that not a shadow falls,
 Chequering the ground—from rock, plant, tree, or tower.*

But the poet's description is seldom simple and direct. Usually he institutes some comparison between what he is describing and some other object:—

"The trembling eyebright showed her sapphire blue,
 The thyme her purple, *like the blush of even.*"†

He does not, indeed, generally state the resemblance at length, but substitutes the terms applicable to the one thing for the simple enumeration of the features of the other, and so brings those features more vividly before the mind's eye:—

"The stream whose *inconstant bosom*
 Was pranked under boughs of embowering blossom
 With golden and green light slanting through
 Their *heaven of many a tangled hue.*"‡

"And birch-trees risen in *silver colonnade.*"§

But description may involve more than the Fancy, it may reach the sphere of the Imagination. This may be seen in a slight degree in some of the examples already given, where not only the actual bare facts of the scene are conveyed, but something also of their effect upon the poet's feeling. It is more fully shown in Tennyson's description of a twilight scene:—

"The doubtful dusk reveal'd
 The knolls once more where, couch'd at ease,
 The white kine glimmer'd, and the trees
Laid their dark arms about the field."||

* Wordsworth, "A Night Piece."

† Wordsworth, "Sonnets on the River Duddon," No. 6.

‡ Shelley, "The Sensitive Plant."

§ Wordsworth, "River Duddon," No. 5. || "In Memoriam," 95.

This last line exactly conveys the weird effect of spreading trees in an imperfect light. It not only expresses the scene, but something also of the sentiment of it.

Observe that we have been speaking only of word-*painting*. The full sentiment of which material things are capable is not always connected with their pictorial qualities. Thus Spenser, in describing trees, mixes together visible characteristics with associations of usefulness and customary employment :—

“ The aspen, *good for staves ; the cypress funeral ;*
The laurel, meed of mighty conquerors,
And poets sage ; the fir that weepeth still ;
The willow, worn of forlorn paramours ;
The yew, obedient to the bender's will ;
*The birch, for shafts ; the sallow for the mill ; ” **

and so forth. The contemplation of external facts sets the poet thinking about other things. He cannot always be literal ; the objects he is describing associate themselves involuntarily with far-off scenes, and suggest unlooked-for comparisons. Longfellow sings thus of flowers :—

“ Everywhere about us they are glowing,
 Some like stars, to tell us Spring is born ;
 Others, their blue eyes with tears o'erflowing,
 Stand, *like Ruth*, amid the golden corn.”

A whole world of loveliness is in these last two lines. But the higher Imagination does not stop at the outside :—

“ The Poet, faithful and far-seeing,
 Sees, alike in stars and flowers, a part
 Of the self-same, universal being,
 Which is throbbing in his brain and heart.

* *Faerie Queene*, Book i., Canto i.

"Gorgeous flowerets in the sunlight shining,
 Blossoms flaunting in the eye of day,
 Tremulous leaves, with soft and silver lining,
 Buds that open only to decay;

"*Brilliant hopes, all woven in gorgeous tissues,
 Flaunting gayly in the golden light;
 Large desires, with most uncertain issues,
 Tender wishes, blossoming at night!*

"*These in flowers and men are more than seeming,
 Workings are they of the self-same power,
 Which the Poet, in no idle dreaming,
 Seeth in himself and in the flowers.*"

It is in this direct expression of thought that the poet has the advantage over other artists. He carries his human sympathy everywhere.

Thus, to pass to another art:—if he deals with Architecture, it is in no mechanical fashion. At the least, he shows appreciation of the outward expression of buildings. Listen to Sir Walter Scott:—

"A solemn, huge, and dark-red pile
 Placed on the margin of the isle.

"In Saxon strength that Abbey frowned,
 With massive arches broad and round,
 That rose alternate, row and row,
 On ponderous columns, short and low." *

But this is not enough. Scott goes on to tell of the injuries received by the Abbey from the hand of the spoiler, and the mouldering influences of the "wasting sea-breeze." And all at once he lifts the building out of the category of dull, lifeless things:—

* Marmion, Canto ii.

"Yet still entire the Abbey stood,
Like veteran worn, but unsubdued."

And in another place, the same poet with "one touch of Nature" penetrates at once to the true spirit (so to speak) of a building he is describing:—

"The battled towers, the Donjon Keep,
The loop-hole grates, *where captives weep.*" *

Turner made an exquisite drawing of this very castle (Norham Castle, on the Tweed), but the suggestion in Scott's last phrase was beyond his power to convey directly.

Moreover, it is not the Permanent Arts only whose functions Poetry will take upon itself. It provides the actor with the language which supplies the motive of his art. And, in his absence, it will undertake to describe actions for itself. All epic poetry consists of unacted dramas.

So, too, Poetry can, in some degree, convey the effect of Dancing. It does this chiefly by its music.

"When the merry bells ring round,
And the jocund rebecks sound
To many a youth and many a maid,
Dancing in the chequer'd shade." †

Here, the redundant syllables of the third line, followed by the sudden emphasis on the first syllable of the fourth, give exactly the *pulse* of a dance. A very striking example of a similar use of versification is afforded by Victor Hugo's poem "Les Djinns." The poet is describing the passage of a number of these spirits through the air; and though this does

not strictly come under the head of "Dancing," it sufficiently illustrates the expression of motion. The poem commences thus :—

" Murs, ville
Et port,
Asile
De mort,
Mer grise,
Où brise
La brise,
Tout dort.

" Dans la plaine
Nait un bruit,
C'est l'haleine
De la nuit,
Elle brame
Comme une âme
Qu'une flamme
Toujours suit.

" La voix plus haute
Semble un grélot,
D'un nain qui saute
C'est le galop.
Il fuit, s'élance,
Puis, en cadence,
Sur un pied danse,
Au bout d'un flot."

In each stanza the length of the lines is increased by one syllable, until a line of ten syllables is reached :—

" Cris de l'enfer ! voix qui hurle et qui pleure !
L'horrible essaim, poussé par l'aquilon,
Sans doute, ô ciel ! s'abat sur ma demeure."

Then, as the crowd of demons passes, the verse gradually contracts, and finally dies away as it began.

" On doute
La nuit
J'écoute :—
Tout fuit,
Tout passe ;
L'espace
Efface
Le bruit."

The same order of the rhymes is preserved throughout, and by its pleasant variety greatly aids the effect.

This example shows, also, how Music is suggested in Poetry. Poetry *presents* music of a certain kind, by the aid of which it *represents* other kinds. Coleridge describes one of the sounds heard by the Ancient Mariner during his weird voyage thus :—

" Still the sails made on
A pleasant noise till noon,
A noise like of a hidden brook
In the leafy month of June,
That to the sleeping woods all night
Singeth a quiet tune."

It will be observed that the musical effect here is not due entirely to the scansion of the lines, but also, and perhaps chiefly, to the choice and arrangement of the vowel sounds. The same process produces very different results in Milton's celebrated line,

"Sonorous metal blowing martial sounds."

Nothing can come nearer to the effect of martial music than this, except music itself. Compare with it an exquisite stanza of Spenser's :—

" The joyous birds, shrouded in cheerful shade,
Their notes unto the voice attemper'd sweet ;

Th' angelical, soft, trembling voices made
To th' instruments divine response meet;
The silver-sounding instruments did meet
With the base murmur of the waters' fall;
The waters' fall, with difference discreet,
Now soft, now loud, unto the wind did call;
The gentle warbling wind low answered to all." *

It will be perceived that, with such means as the poet possesses, it is at least possible to strike the key-note of a piece of music, and, at any rate in some degree, to suggest its leading features.

With regard to the general subject of versification, it was remarked above that the aid of Music would naturally be sought in enforcing the expression of Poetry. This alone would be a sufficient explanation of the use of versification; but there are other reasons for its employment. In the first place, it is convenient as inviting the reader or hearer, at the outset, to expect certain characteristics of subject and treatment; and not only is it conventionally and practically understood to imply these, but there is a certain fitness in the association of events and feelings different from those of everyday life with a style of language different from ordinary speech. We have already had occasion to notice more than once, with reference to other arts, that an exact copyism of Nature is undesirable, and the same principle applies here. Poetry is true to the facts of Nature, but it is with a spiritual truth rather than a mere external semblance. It is necessary, therefore, that it should be raised above the level of commonplace things. Its medium is the common speech which is used for the

* *Faërie Queene*, Book ii., Canto xii.

conveyance of the merest trivialities of thought, and the transaction of the most prosaic business. It is very necessary, therefore, that the different nature of its poetical employment should be effectually marked. Some change in the method of using this common medium is needed, lest the higher ideas should be degraded, and the noble thought of the poet fail to awaken due response. Further, it must not be forgotten that the poet, like every other artist, pursues Beauty as in itself an end worthy of attainment. He is therefore not indifferent to the mere form and structure of his words and sentences. But, besides this, the beauty of his conceptions can find no fitting expression except in beauty of diction. The order and harmony existing within his mind produce a corresponding order and harmony in his language. So much is this the case, that some have asserted that all true Poetry exhibits lyrical power as a distinguishing feature:—that a poet never *says* anything, but *sings* it. This is only true up to a certain point, as will be seen presently; but at the same time it indicates a very important fact. A great poet will not only avail himself of the assistance of verse in nearly every case, but he will choose it naturally. It will be no clog to him. On the contrary, he will find it the easiest method of conveying his ideas. One of the most arbitrary forms to which a poet can be restrained is the sonnet. Yet Wordsworth writes of it thus:—

“ The prison, unto which we doom
Ourselves, no prison is: and hence to me,
In sundry moods, ’twas pastime to be bound
Within the sonnet’s scanty plot of ground.”

Thus the poet chooses the particular form of versification which suits him best, and corresponds most closely with his feeling and his subject; but, as a rule, he modulates his language in *some* way, either adopting an established form, or constructing one of his own.

The methods by which this modulation may be effected are very various, but there is one general principle upon which they are all founded: the principle of Likeness in Unlikeness, or Diversity in Uniformity. The tracing of either agreements or differences is, in itself, a natural source of pleasure to the mind. In versification, both are found existing together. A precisely similar reconciliation of opposing principles is characteristic of many kinds of decorative art, pictorial and sculptural. An ornamented capital, or an illuminated border in a book, will, if it is a good work of art, display a variety of forms in a regular and orderly arrangement. The leaves upon the spray will not all grow alike, and yet they will all fall into their right places. Verse, with the poet, corresponds to the free service of the architect or the decorative painter. It is full of life and vigour, yet it submits, without appearance of restraint, to fixed laws. If we like to dwell upon it, it will give us pleasure from the sense of difficulty surmounted: but in the highest result, we are conscious of no difficulty. All is perfectly expressed, but the poet appears to have had no desire to transgress the limits of his rhythm.

The simplest form in which this Likeness in Unlikeness can be manifested is the "Parallelism"

or "Thought-Rhythm," as it has been called, of ancient Hebrew poetry. In this the uniformity is found, not in the form of the language, but in the order in which the ideas are introduced. There are several kinds of Thought-Rhythm, the characteristics of which will be best understood from examples. The simplest kind is when the sense, and, to some extent, the form, of each member of the sentence is repeated in different words, usually with some amplification, or with increased force. It is interesting as being found in the oldest specimen of Poetry which the world possesses; the speech, namely, of the antediluvian Lamech to his wives:—

"Adah and Zillah, hear my voice;
Ye wives of Lamech, hearken unto my speech;
For I have slain a man to my wounding,
And a young man to my hurt.
If Cain shall be avenged sevenfold,
Truly Lamech seventy and sevenfold." (Gen. iv. 23.)

A different translation exhibits the correspondence of the parts still more clearly. This correspondence is shown very simply in the riddle propounded by Samson at his marriage-feast:—

"Out of the eater came forth meat,
And out of the strong came forth sweetness." (Judges xiv. 14.)

Sometimes the sense gradually rises. Take, for example, a passage from the Book of Job:—

"Oh that my words were now written!
Oh that they were printed in a book!
That they were graven with an iron pen
And lead in the rock for ever!" (Job xix. 23.)

Another variety of Parallelism has been called "Antithetical," a term which sufficiently indicates its character. The following example from the Book of Ezekiel shows that the parallelism may be spread over a considerable space :—

" When the righteous turneth from his righteousness,
And committeth iniquity,
He shall even die thereby;
But if the wicked turn from his wickedness,
And do that which is lawful and right,
He shall live thereby." (Ezek. xxxiii. 18, 19.)

The greater part of the Book of Proverbs, after the ninth chapter, consists of antithetical parallelisms. Thus :—

" The integrity of the upright shall guide them :
But the perverseness of transgressors shall destroy them." (Prov. xi. 3.)

The following is a double antithesis :—

" There is that maketh himself rich,
Yet hath nothing ;
There is that maketh himself poor,
Yet hath great riches." (Prov. xiii. 7.)

A third kind of Thought-Rhythm has been called "Introverted Parallelism." In this, the first line is parallel with the last, the second with the last but one, and so on. Thus in the fifty-second Psalm, the second, third, and fourth verses may be arranged as follows :—

" Thy tongue deviseth mischiefs ;
Like a sharp razor, working deceitfully.
Thou lovest evil more than good,
And lying rather than to speak righteousness.
Thou lovest all devouring words,
O thou deceitful tongue !"

Another example may be cited from Hosea xiii. 14 :—

" I will ransom them from the power of the grave ;
 I will redeem them from death :
 O death ! I will be thy plagues ;
 O grave ! I will be thy destruction."

A still more remarkable instance occurs in the 135th Psalm, ver. 15-18 :—

" The idols of the heathen are silver and gold,
 The work of men's hands.
 They have mouths, but they speak not ;
 Eyes have they, but they see not ;
 They have ears, but they hear not ;
 Neither is there any breath in their mouths.
 They that make them are like unto them :
 So is every one that trusteth in them."

One more kind of Thought-Rhythm is called by Kitto "Rhythm by Gradation." In this the thought of one line is made the starting-point of another. Thus :—

" I will lift up mine eyes to the hills,
 From whence *cometh my help*.
My help cometh from the Lord,
 Which made heaven and earth : " (Ps. cxxi.)

and so on through the whole Psalm.

Many more examples might be given of each class of Parallelism, but the above will probably suffice to make the principle of the method clear. It may be observed that this kind of poetical expression was peculiarly suitable for the inspired writings, as its effect may be almost entirely preserved in translation.

The uniformity required by the principle of versification has, however, been usually supplied by some artificial arrangement connected with the forms of the words. This may depend either upon *quantity* or *accent*. The former was the basis of the ancient

classical versification. Each syllable had, as a rule, a certain definite value; it was, in a fixed way, either long or short. The whole verse was regarded as consisting of a fixed number of temporal equivalents, two short syllables being considered equal to one long one. The number of syllables might, therefore, vary greatly, but the *time* was always the same. The verse was usually divided into a certain number of groups of syllables called feet. Thus an iambus consisted of a short and a long syllable; a trochee of a long and a short; a spondee of two long ones; an anapæst of two short syllables followed by one long; a dactyl of a long syllable followed by two short ones. According to the kind of verse employed, these feet had a definite position assigned to them, or were allowed to be interchanged with equivalents. Thus in the hexameter, the first four feet were either dactyls or spondees, but the fifth was always a dactyl, and the sixth a spondee. For example:—

"Tityrē, | tū pātū:lē rēcū'bāns sūb | tægminē | fāgī;
Silvēs|trēm tēnū| Mūsām mēd|tārīs ā|vōnā."* †

In the Sapphic stanza, the three first verses consisted of a trochee, a spondee, a dactyl, and two trochees. The fourth, called an Adonic verse, consisted of a dactyl and a spondee. Thus:—

"Pēra|cōs ō|di, pūr, | āppā|rātūs"
Displ|cēnt nōx|ē phly|rā cō|rōnā|
Mittē | sōctā|rī, rōē | quō lō|cōrūm|| †
Sōrā mō|rētūr."|| ‡

* VIRG., Buc. I.

† The last syllable of a verse may be considered long or short as occasion requires.

‡ HOR., Carm. I. 38.

An infinite number of different verses may obviously be formed in this way. Here is a couplet of a very gay type :—

“Lyđfā, | dīc, pēr | ōmnēs||
Tē dē|ōs ō|rō. || Sýbārīn | cūr prōpē|rās ā|māndō||
Perdere?” *

In English, and in most other modern languages, the pronunciation is to a great extent arbitrary, and stress is placed upon certain syllables with little or no regard to the position of the letters of which the word is composed. Thus, in the substantive or adjective *présent*, we accent the first syllable, but in the verb *présent*, the second, and in the derivative *présentation*, the third. The *quantity* of the syllables is therefore not defined as in Latin. Hence, in our ordinary English versification, the line consists of a definite number of syllables, which are all regarded as equal in length, the rhythm being supplied by the accentuation. The English heroic line contains ten syllables:—

“Is this the région, this the soil, the clime?”

It is, indeed, possible, by considering the accented syllables as corresponding with long ones, and the unaccented syllables with short, to regard such verses as consisting of a certain number of *feet*, which in the example just given would be five iambuses. But the accent may be so variously placed that it would be almost impossible to reduce this kind of versification to any regular system of scansion. Here are some specimens from “Paradise Lost:”—

“Whence and what art thou, execrable shape,
That dar’st, though grim and terrible, advance
Thy miscreant’d front athwart my way?”

* HOR., Carm. I. 8.

And here is one in which nearly all the syllables are accented :—

“ Rócks, cáves, lákes, féns, bógs, déns ánd shádes óf déath.”

The same features are observable in other kinds of verse. Longfellow’s “Hiawatha” is written in a shorter blank verse :—

“ Hárldy fróm hís búriéd wigwám
Cótld thē hūntēr fórcē á pásságe ;
Wíth hís mítlēs ánd hís snów-shōes
Váinly wálk’d hē thróugh thē fórest,
Sóught fōr bírd ór béast, ánd fōund nóne.”

Our language is, however, not altogether deficient in metrical quantity. It is possible to compose verses on the principle of their containing a certain number of feet, rather than of syllables. A great deal of Browning’s poetry is constructed on this plan. The music of the following depends upon there being in each line the same number (six) of accented syllables, the number of the unaccented syllables varying :—

“ Hád I búť plēntý of mōney, mōney enóugh ánd tó spáre,
Thē hóuse fōr mé, nō dóubť, wēre á hóuse ín thē cíty squáre.
Áh, súch á lífe, súch á lífe, ás óne léáds áť thē wíndow thére !

“ Sómething tó sée, by Bácchus ! sómething tó héar, áť léast ;
Thére, thē whóle dáy lóng, óne’s lífe ís á pērféct féást ;
Whíle, úp áť á vílla, óne líves, I máintáín íť, nō móre thán á béast.”

The accentuation of our language makes it impossible to use for it the classical system of scansion, but by allowing one accented and one unaccented syllable to do duty for a spondee, when necessary, as well as two accented ones, it is possible to construct

verses very closely corresponding in effect to Latin hexameters.

"Fáthér of | twénty | childrén wás | hé, and | móre thán á | húndréd,
Childrén's | childrén | róde ón hís | knée, and | héard hís gréat |
wáitch tick."||

"Áh! shé wás | fáir, éx'céedíng | fáir tó bē|hóld, ás shé | stóod wíth||
Nákéd, | anów - whíte | féet, ón thē | gléámíng | flóor of hēr |
chámber."|| *

It will be seen that the result is only obtained by a sort of compromise, and accordingly it will not do to push the attempt to naturalise classical metres in our own tongue too far. Southey tried to compose verses in the Sapphic metre. Thus:—

"Cold was the night-wind, drifting fast the snow fell;
Wide were the downs, and shelterless and naked;
When a poor wanderer struggled on her journey,
Weary and way-sore." †

At first this seems to bear considerable resemblance to its prototype. As we usually pronounce the Latin lines, their effect is very similar to the above.

"Íntēgēr vītāē, scēlērīsqūe pūrūs,"

sounds very much like

"Wide wēre thē dōwns, and shēltērlēss and nákēd;"

or,

"'Pítý mē!' fēebly cried thē lōnely wáund'rēr;"

but if we attempt to scan the English line, the difference between the two becomes at once apparent. The Latin scans thus:—

"Íntēgēr vītāē scēlērīsqūe | pūrūs,"||

* *Evangeline.*

† *The Widow.*

but to treat the other as composed of the same feet produces a most ludicrous effect :—

"Wide wēre | thē dōwns, | ānd shēltēr|lēss ānd | nākēd :||
 'Pity | mō !' fēe|bly eried thē | lōnelȳ | wānd'rēr."†

Southey's verses may be very pleasant ones, but they are not Sapphic.

In addition to the musical correspondence of verses in metrical accent or quantity, the recurrence of sound which is termed "rhyme" has been very largely called to the aid of the poet. Sometimes it is used with an irregular metre :—

"There was a time when meadow, grove, and stream,
 The earth, and every common sight,
 To me did seem
 Appareled in celestial light."*

More usually rhyme occurs in connection with some of the metrical systems noticed above :—

"Quel bien veut on que me fasse
 L'honneur, promis à mes os,
 D'un marbre, où mon nom s'efface
 Sous le pied de tous les sots."†

The recurrence may be of a single sound, as in the above examples, or of several like syllables :—

"En amor londana
 Ha dolor probdana ;
 Per mi eis o sai,
 Que set jorns de la setmana
 Sospir, e'n dis, Hai !

* Wordsworth, "Intimations of Immortality." † Béranger, "Au Galop."

Mortz fos ieu, que'l via es plana ;
 Qar non hai rason certana
 D'anar, so aten lai,
 Hai ! s'en brieu no la vei, brieumen morai."*

Rhymes of more than two syllables occur, as a rule, only in humorous verses :—

" Her favourite science was the mathematical,
 Her noblest virtue was her magnanimity,
 Her wit (she sometimes tried at wit) was Attic all,
 Her serious sayings darken'd to sublimity.
 In short, in all things she was fairly what I call
 A prodigy :—her morning dress was dimity,
 Her evening silk, or, in the summer, muslin,
 And other stuffs, with which I won't stay puzzling."†

Rhyme is so common that it is unnecessary to give examples of its various uses. It is, however, very needful to insist that both rhyme and metre should always be regarded as servants, and never be allowed to become masters. There is a certain beauty in correct metre and accurate rhyme, which it would be foolish to ignore ; but to attribute to these things any great importance, when compared with the higher functions of Poetry, is to destroy the

* This example (in Provençal) is taken from the "*Choix des Poésies Originales des Troubadours*" of M. Raynouard (Tome ii.) The following somewhat obscure translation is given by M. Raynouard:—

" En Amour lointaine
 Il y a douleur prochaine,
 Par moi-même je le sais
 Vû que sept jours de la semaine
 Je soupire, et j'en dis, hélas !
 Mûrt fussé-je, vû que la voie est applanie,
 Parce que je n'ai raison certaine
 D'aller, cela j'attends là.
 Ah ! si dans peu je ne la vois, bientôt je mourrai."

† Don Juan, Canto i. 12.

vitality of the art. A cockney rhyme is, of course, offensive. It indicates that the versifier's ear is uncultivated and unrefined; but there is no reason why the sounds which are made to correspond should in all cases be subject to an inflexible rule of absolute identity. Mrs Browning advocated the use of the Spanish "Asonante" verses,* in which the *same* sound does not necessarily recur, but one comes in its place just sufficiently like it to suggest a correspondence between the two. An example will explain the method:—

"Moro Alcayde ! Moro Alcayde !
El de la vellida *barba*,
El Rey te manda prender
Por la prendida de *Alhama* :—
Y cortarte la cabeza,
Y ponerla en el *Alhambra*,
Porque a ti castigó sea,
Y otros tiemblen en *miralla*."

The following is offered as an imitation, though it is not pretended that the effect is so good in the comparatively unmusical English:—

"Moor Alcayde ! Moor Alcayde !
On whose breast the beard descendeth,
The king commandeth us to seize thee
For Alhama's base surrender :—
And to take thy head from off thee,
On the Alhambra to expose it.
So stern vengeance shall o'ertake thee,
And others fear when they behold it."

Mrs Browning's own verses are frequently "Asonante" rather than "Consonante"—to use the terms by

* It is said that some ancient German poetry presents the same feature, as also does that of other romance languages than Spanish.

which the Spanish distinguish the imperfect from the complete form of rhyme. Yet these will generally be felt to be sufficient for their purpose. The following specimens are taken from the poem entitled "The Dead Pan :"—

" Neptune lies beside the *trident*,
Dull and senseless as a *stone* ;
And old Pluto, deaf and *silent*,
Is cast out into the *sun*.
Ceres smileth stern thereat :
' We all now are desolate—
Now Pan is dead.' "

" Oh, ye vain false gods of *Hellas* !
Ye are silent evermore,
And I dash down this old *chalice*
Whence libations ran of yore."

It will be observed that, in these examples, the assonance is sometimes due to the recurrence of the same vowels, sometimes to that of the same consonants.

As an argument against the rigid enforcement of accuracy in rhyme, it is to be noted that the greatest purists in this matter are often forced to substitute an equivalent of spelling for one of sound. Thus Pope :—

" Then sadly say, with mutual pity moved,
' Oh, may we never love as these have loved ! ' " *

If this is allowed, it is surely better to allow frankly all fairly similar sounds as sufficient rhymes.

It may be remarked that poetry of a very exalted character is somewhat impatient of the jingling feature of rhyme altogether. The ancient classical

* *Eloïsa to Abelard.*

poets were content without it, and it is generally considered a barbarism to introduce it into their dignified languages. This caution, however, may be carried too far. There can be no valid objection to the use of rhyme in Latin, when that language is made the vehicle of gay and airy fancies, and it must be confessed that Latin rhymes particularly well. Here are some stanzas of a fairy song by the Cavalier poet Randolph:—

“ Nos beata fauni proles,
Quibus non est magna moles,
Quamvis lunam incolamus,
Hortos sæpe frequentamus.

“ Furto cuncta magis bella ;
Furto dulcior puella ;
Furto omnia decora ;
Furto poma dulciora.

“ Cum mortales lecto jacent,
Nobis poma noctu placent ;
Illa tamen sunt ingrata
Nisi furto sint parata.”

It will be noticed that these merry verses are constructed on the principle of accent instead of quantity; and there really seems to be no reason why they should not be.

In the same way, however accurately metre may be observed, the utmost freedom must be conceded to the poet in its manipulation. The musical effect of verse is greatly aided by the *pauses* which occur from time to time. Their value may be estimated by comparing the lines of

a mechanical versifier like Parnell with those of a greater man :—

" Far in a wild, unknown to public view
From youth to age a reverend hermit grew ;
The moss his bed, the cave his humble cell,
His food the fruits, his drink the crystal well ;
Remote from man, with God he pass'd the days,
Prayer all his business, all his pleasure praise.
A life so sacred, such serene repose,
Seem'd heaven itself, till one suggestion rose ;
That vice should triumph, virtue vice obey,
This sprung some doubt of Providence's sway," *

and so forth. It will be seen that, throughout this passage, the pause invariably occurs after either the fourth or fifth syllable. Now take a passage from Milton, selected almost at random :—

" A happy rural seat of various view ;
Groves, whose rich trees wept odorous gums and balm ;
Others whose fruit, burnish'd with golden rind,
Hung amiable ; Hesperian fables true,
If true, here only, and of delicious taste ;
Betwixt them lawns, or level downs, and flocks
Grazing the tender herb, were interposed." †

Here, not only is the position of the principal pause again and again varied, but two or three frequently occur in the same line. It is by such means that the style acquires life, and the uniformity, being accompanied by a continual diversity, not only of substance but also of form, loses all its mechanical effect.

In this and other respects the French heroic verse is greatly inferior to our own. Not only is it ham-

* The Hermit.

† *Paradise Lost*, Book iv. Compare the pauses in Spenser's stanza quoted above (p. 309).

pered with rhyme, but its measure is at the best jerky, and its pauses at the same time monotonous. We will take an example—not from Corneille or Racine, for they were as precise as Pope himself—but from the poet who, of all Frenchmen, is, perhaps, least fettered by the rules of the classicists—Victor Hugo:—

“ Nous sommés ses bouffons, mais il est notrè fou;
Il nous croit ses jouets, pauvre homme ! il est le nôtre.
Nous dupé-t-il jamais par quelque patenôtre ?
Nous épouvanté-t-il par ses éclats de voix,
Ou ces clins d'yeux dévots qui font trembler des rois ?
Quand il vient de prier, de prêcher, de proscrire,
L'hypocritè, peut-il nous regarder sans rire ?
Sa sourdè politique et ses desseins profonds
Trompènt le monde entier, hormis quatrè bouffons.” *

This is probably as favourable a passage as could be selected, and yet the principal pause falls, in every case, in the same place. The only apparent exception is the seventh line, but even then a slight pause must be made after “peut-il,” if it is wished to preserve the flow of the verse.†

Pause, it will be readily seen, may add greatly to the expressive power of verse:—

“ Sounds

At which the universal host up sent
A shout, that tore hell's concave, and beyond
Frighted the reign of Chaos and old Night.”

Notice how the pause after the word *shout* increases its intensity, and how we seem to hear the echoes

* Cromwell, Acte iii. Sc. i.

† The “hémistiche,” or division in French verse, is the subject of very strict rules by the grammarians.

and reverberations of the roar in the distance, at the pause after the word *concave*.

Another mode of utilising the effect of pause is by a sudden stop and unexpected shortening of the line. Thus Browning :—

“ At first, I saw nought but the blackness; but soon I descried
A something more black than the blackness,—the vast, the upright
Main prop which sustains the pavilion; and slow into sight
Grew a figure against it, gigantic and blackest of all;
Then a sunbeam that burst thro’ the tent-roof, *showed Saul*.”

And Longfellow :—

“ Like a beauteous barge was she,
Still at rest on the sandy beach,
Just beyond the billow’s reach;
But he
Was the restless, seething, stormy sea.”

À propos of the management of versification, we may notice in passing that French verse consists of a regular number of syllables, every syllable being reckoned, including those final *e*’s which, under ordinary circumstances, are mute. These, however, are elided when they occur before a vowel or an *h* mute, and are not reckoned at the end of a line. Thus :—

“ Chez le libraire absent tout entre, tout se mêle
Les livres sur Evrard fondent comme la grêle : ” *

which must be pronounced—

“ Chez le librai’r absent tout entrè, tout se mêl’
Les livrès sur Evrard fondènt commè la grêl’.”

These and other similar rules give a stilted character

* Boileau, “ Le Lutrin.”

to French poetry, to which English ears find it difficult to become accustomed. In their popular ballads the French assume a licence which was once possessed by ourselves, but has since been lost; that, namely, of sounding the unaccented *e's* or suppressing them, as may be most convenient. The following are printed as they are to be sung, the place of the *e's* which are not to be sounded being supplied by apostrophes :—

" Il était unë reinë, Qui n'avait pas d'enfants;
C'qui lui causait d'la peinë, Et des embêtëments;
Dans sa douleur d'n'êtr' pas mërë
Ell' allait mourir pour d'bon,
Quand l'ciel, touché d'sa prièrë,
Lui fit cadeau d'un poupon;
On l'app'la Mirliti," &c.

" Cadet Roussell' a trois gros chiens; (*bis*)
L'un court au lièvr', l'autr' au lapin, (*bis*)
L' troisièm' s'enfuit quand on l'appellë
Comm' le chien de Jean d'Nivellë.
Ah ! ah ! ah ! mais, vraiment,
Cadet Roussell' est bon enfant."

Chaucer took exactly the same liberty :—

" Embrouded was he, as it were a meede
Al ful of *fresshe* flourës, whyte and rede;
Syngynge he was, or floytynge, al the day,
He was as *fressh* as is the monthe of May."
" And whan this Duc was come vn to the launde
Vnder the sonne he looked, and anon,
He was war of Arcite and Palamon,
That foughten breme, as it were bolës two.
The brightë swerdës wenten to and fro
So hidously, that with the leestë strook
It seemèd as it woldë fille an ook." *

* Partly modernised :—

" Embroidered was he, as it were a mead
All full of freshë flowers, white and red;

The only relic of this licence now remaining to the poet is the liberty to sound the final *ed* of the past tense and past participle as a separate syllable, or not, at discretion.

We must not forget that we set out upon the examination of this department of Poetry with the idea that the systematic modulation of language, which so generally characterises the art, is employed, not only for its own sake as an element of beauty, but also, and in the most important way, as aiding in the expression of the poet's thoughts and fancies. This is the best and highest function of every characteristic of Poetry. Poetry consists only indirectly in the *form* of the poem. It is the feeling and imagination, which seek for utterance through the means employed, which constitute the direct poetical element in the result. We have seen how modulation may assist in the conveyance of ideas suitable primarily to other arts; and the subtle element of music aids no less in the expression of those spiritual ideas which are proper to this art exclusively.

So much has already been said, in this and previous chapters, respecting the Imagination, that it is only necessary here to observe that there are two kinds of

Singing he was, or fluting, all the day,
He was as fresh as is the month of May."

"And when this Duke was come unto the land
Under the sun he looked, and anon,
He was ware of Arcite and Palamon,
That fought fiercely, as it were bull's two,
The bright sword's wenten to and fro
So hideously, that with the least stroke
It seemed as it would felle an oak."

poetical ideas besides that musical species of Poetry which is concerned with the outward materials of the art, and which we have lately been discussing. These two kinds may be called, Poetry of Detail, and Poetry of Subject. A poet, as we have seen, describes the most ordinary scenes and events in such a way as to transfer to them somewhat of his own individuality. He expresses a simple fact so as to set up at once an association of ideas. For example Victor Hugo has this to say:—

“ Puisque nos pères et nos mères
Sont allés où nous irons tous,
Puisque des enfants, têtes chères,
Se sont endormis avant nous.”

These are the facts, but these do not content him; he must place them in a stronger light, and so he proceeds thus:—

“ Puisque la terre où tu t'inclines
Et que tu mouilles de tes pleurs,
A déjà toutes nos racines,
Et quelques unes de nos fleurs.” *

Here, not only is the feeling of the former stanza intensified, but the facts assume an altogether different aspect. The sadness is indeed increased. Parents and children are not merely absent or sleeping; they are buried. The flowers of life have faded. And yet the word “racines” not only speaks of the source of our own sorrowful lives, it contains also the germ of a joyful immortality.

Sometimes, indeed, the poet shows the intensity of his feeling by stating some simple fact which serves

* Chants du Crépuscule, No. 29.

to invest the whole subject with a kindred sentiment. In Longfellow's description of the famine, in "Hiawatha," he tells us how the ice froze thicker and thicker, and the snow fell deeper and deeper, until bird and beast disappeared from the forest, and often the hunter himself fell from weakness, and perished with cold and hunger. At last came the Famine and the Fever, and cast their terrible spells over Hiawatha's lovely bride, Minnehaha. Then says the poet:—

"Forth into the empty forest
Rushed the maddened Hiawatha;
In his heart was deadly sorrow,
In his face a stony firmness."

And then, with one last touch which completes the horror of the story, he adds:—

"On his brow the sweat of anguish
Started, but it froze and fell not."

Oftener, however, this Poetry of Detail shows itself in simple metaphor; illustrating the subject in passing, and no more. Thus Shelley sings of—

"An ocean of dreams without a sound,
Whose waves never mark, though they ever impress,
The light sand which paves it—consciousness."*

Another and higher phase of this kind of Poetry is displayed in the association of external facts with spiritual ones, illustrating the one by the other. Milton was possessed of imagination of the most sublime order, and of magnificent descriptive power. With all this, Milton was blind. Gray perceived a

* The Sensitive Plant, Part I.

certain fitness in such physical sightlessness of one whose mental vision was so keen, and he expresses it thus :—

“ He passed the flaming bounds of Place and Time :
The living Throne, the sapphire-blaze
Where angels tremble while they gaze.
He saw ; but, blasted with excess of light,
Closed his eyes in endless night.” *

It will be seen that in these examples the Imagination is occupied with matters of detail, which may be quite beside the main drift of the poem ; and it is clear that such methods may be used in the treatment of almost any subject. On the other hand, the subject, as a whole, may be so essentially poetical, that we may well afford to dispense with the special poetical treatment of minor features. Tennyson suggests a question which must have occurred to most thinking people. What did Lazarus say to those who asked him of his state during those days of death ?

“ He told it not, or something sealed
The lips of that Evangelist.” †

But what manner of man was he after his resurrection ? Surely the experience of those wondrous days must have left its mark upon him. He could not possibly be just as other men. Browning takes up this fascinating subject, and treats it from a suggested contemporary point of view. He supposes an “ Epistle, containing the Strange Medical Experience of Karshish, the Arab Physician.” This man, writing in the course of his travels to another leech—his

* Progress of Poesy.

† In Memoriam, No. xxxi.

teacher—gives an account of what he considers a very curious

“Case of mania—sub-induced
By epilepsy, at the turning-point
Of trance prolonged unduly some three days,
When, by the exhibition of some drug,
Or spell, exorcisation, stroke of art,
Unknown to me, and which 'twere well to know,
The evil thing, out-breaking all at once,
Left the man whole and sound of body.”

He goes on to describe how the patient's reason appears to have been upset by the suddenness of his recovery, and how he has taken up the notion (of the truth of which he is absolutely convinced) “that he was dead and then restored to life.” This the physician treats as a variety of a not uncommon kind of delusion; but what strikes him as very strange is the fact that the whole life of the man has in some way become affected by his belief:—

“This grown man eyes the world now like a child.”

When some of the elders of his tribe brought him to the physician, and eagerly told all the circumstances of the case, he

“Folded his two hands and let them talk,
Watching the flies that buzzed; and yet no fool.”

Karshish cannot make him out at all:—

“Discourse to him of prodigious armaments,
Assembled to besiege his city now,
And of the passing of a mule with gourds—
'Tis one! Then take it on the other side,
Speak of some trifling fact—he will gaze rapt
With stupor at its very littleness

{Far as I see), as if in that indeed
He caught prodigious import, whole results—
Should his child sicken unto death—why, look
For scarce abatement of his cheerfulness,
Or pretermission of his daily craft;—
While a word, gesture, glance from that same child
At play, or in the school, or laid asleep,
Will startle him to an agony of fear.”

So the physician goes on, describing the characteristics of a life founded upon a practical knowledge of those spiritual truths which, though we most of us affect to believe in them, yet exert little real influence upon our conduct. And before he closes his letter, the supposed writer reveals that he has been unaccountably impressed with one wild fancy of this madman, viz., that the great leech who cured him was actually none other than God Himself, who came upon this earth and died for the salvation of mankind.

Now, it will be seen that there is so much Poetry in the very conception of this poem, that however simply the story might be told (and Browning tells it for the most part very simply), it could not fail to present the higher features of the Imagination. We feel at once that it is fitting that such ideas should be expressed in modulated language; and we are content to find associated with them few of those graceful fancies which, in the case of another subject, we might feel to be necessary for the elevation of it into the region of Poetry.

It would be interesting to trace other examples of the many varieties of poetical subjects and poetical methods of expression, occurring as they do some-

times apart and sometimes in conjunction, but the above will suffice to explain their nature. It is necessary, however, to insist very strongly that these are the great essential characteristics of Poetry, and that versification, however valuable as an aid to the art, is still a dispensable one. It is, indeed, possible to analyse the workmanship of a poem, and to ascertain the exact method by which an effect has been produced,—to note the particular arrangements of vowels and consonants which have been used, the position of the accents, pauses, and the like. But, in the majority of cases, the poet achieves his result by no elaborate calculation. He *feels* that the general effect of the words he uses expresses what he desires to convey, but he does not put them together like a puzzle. And even where elaborate polish has been used, the result varies with the feeling which has originally dictated the poem. The works of Gray and Pope both “smell of the lamp.” Gray is said to have spent sometimes two or three days in settling and polishing a single stanza of his “Elegy;” but his elaboration seems to have been due to his earnest and unsatisfied desire to express accurately ideas which moved him strongly. Pope gives one the impression of his sitting down very coolly, and often with a sneer in heart and head, settling his verses without caring very much about them, merely with a view to effect.

Many persons have no conception of Poetry apart from verse; but there cannot be a greater mistake than to suppose that the two things must always, necessarily, be connected. It is true that a naturally

poetical subject will be most fully and readily expressed in metrical form, but if we hold that it is the display of the Imagination which constitutes the Poetry, we shall be forced to conclude, not only that it may exist without verse, but that verse may exist without any of the higher and better qualities of Poetry. Wordsworth remarks that "Pope, by the power of verse alone, has contrived to render the plainest common-sense interesting, and even frequently to invest it with the appearance of passion."* This must be conceded; but to do this is not to convert plain common-sense into Poetry. Verse has indeed a beauty and poetry of its own, it is an imperfect kind of music,—but when all this has been allowed, it must still be asserted that the "Essay on Criticism" is an essay, and only in a quite secondary sense, a poem. Not that Pope's opinions are any the worse for being expressed in rhyming couplets. On the contrary, this circumstance, and their terse, epigrammatic form, have greatly contributed to their becoming in so many cases proverbial. It is, however, not difficult to cite specimens of verse which contain, not only no Poetry, but no common-sense. Robert Montgomery (whose pretensions were so effectually demolished by Macaulay) will supply an abundance. Here is one:—

" Land of my soul ! maternal isle,
Arrayed by Freedom's holy smile;
Whose throne is founded in the cause
Of native worth and noble laws ;

* Observ. prefixed to second edition of "Lyrical Ballads,"

*Oh, long may Private Life be found
The glory of our English ground,
And woman on her stainless brow
Wear the bright soul we honour now !* *

Anything more essentially prosaic than this it would be difficult to discover.

On the other hand, it is easy to produce plenty of so-called *prose* passages which fulfil all the highest conditions of poetry :—

“ Care-charming Sleep, thou easer of all woes,
Brother to Death.”

So sing Beaumont and Fletcher. Webster has the same idea :—

“ O thou soft natural Death, that art joint twin
To sweetest Slumber ! ”

Shelley also :—

“ How wonderful is Death,
Death and his brother Sleep ! ”

And Tennyson :—

“ When in the down I sink my head,
Sleep, Death's twin brother, times my breath.”

Every one will admit the poetical character of these passages. Why, then, should we deny the name of poet to Hans Andersen—most delightful of all tellers of fairy-tales? He gives an account of “Ole Luk Oie,” the Dream-god, and how he relates stories to children when they are in bed. This is not very remarkable, but he goes on to speak of the *brother* of this Dream-god, “the other Ole Luk Oie,” who

* Woman the Angel of Life,†

"*is also called Death.* He only knows two stories. One of these is so wonderfully beautiful that no one in the world can imagine anything at all like it; but the other is just as ugly and frightful, so that it would be impossible to describe it."

No better example, again, of the distinction between the Fancy and the Imagination could be given than the same genial writer's story of the "Pea Blossoms." "There were once five peas in one shell. They were green, the shell was green, and so they believed that the whole world must be green also, which was a very natural conclusion." Here is the Fancy, seizing upon external characteristics, and connecting with them imaginary mental operations; with a quiet side-thrust at human foibles. By-and-by the peas were taken possession of by a child, who shot them from his pea-shooter. They met with various fates. One of them intended to fly straight to the Sun, but he fell into a sink. There he swelled to a great size, and grew very proud of being so fat. "'I am the most remarkable,' said he, 'of all the five which were in the shell,' and the sink confirmed the opinion." But now for the Imagination. Another of the peas—a very modest one—flew up into a little crevice beneath a garret window. There it took root, and put forth green leaves. And as it grew and budded, it served to interest and amuse a poor sick child who lay in the garret. It thrived, and its thriving gave to the little invalid and to her sorrowful mother new hopes of life. Gradually the child grew stronger, and the flower bloomed; and at last "the young maiden stood at the open garret window

with sparkling eyes, and the rosy hue of health on her cheeks. She folded her thin hands over the pea-blossom, and thanked God for what He had done." Thus is the true sentiment rightly belonging to flowers—their best function of delighting mankind with a sense of the goodness and perfection of their Creator—made manifest to us. Could verse do more?

So Charles Dickens, in the last chapter he ever wrote, marks the difference between man's feeble, perfunctory religion and the teaching of Nature:—

"Changes of glorious light from moving boughs, songs of birds, scents from gardens, woods, and fields—or rather from the one great garden of the whole cultivated island in its yielding-time—*penetrate into the Cathedral, subdue its earthy odour, and preach the Resurrection and the Life.*"

Nor must it be supposed that "Prose" is without its modulation. It is not, indeed, subdued to regular metrical form, but it may be musical for all that. Two examples from Mr Ruskin will illustrate this:—

"We take our ideas of fearfulness and sublimity alternately from the mountains and the sea, but we associate them unjustly. The sea-wave, with all its beneficence, is yet devouring and terrible; but the silent wave of the blue mountain is lifted toward heaven in a stillness of perpetual mercy; and the one surge, unfathomable in its darkness, the other, unshaken in its faithfulness, for ever bear the seal of their appointed Symbolism:—

"*"Thy righteousness is like the great mountain;
Thy judgments are a great deep."* *

"All are to be men of genius in their degree—rivulets or rivers, it

* Modern Painters, Part v. Chap. 7.

does not matter, so that the souls be clear and pure ; not dead walls encompassing dead heaps of things known and numbered, but running waters in the sweet wilderness of things unnumbered and unknown, conscious only of the living banks on which they partly refresh and partly reflect the flowers, and so pass on." *

Surely no one can deny to these passages the quality of music, or think that such aid as expression derives from the modulation of language is wholly wanting here. If, indeed, it be conceded that Poetry is not a name for a particular form of words, but rather for the expression, in any way, of certain kinds of ideas and feelings, and a certain habit of mind, then it will be seen that Prose and Poetry may pass into each other very gradually, and that, in like manner, it would be futile to attempt to draw any hard and fast line between the methods employed by them. The style used by one man, who thinks entirely in prose, may be precisely the style which commends itself to another, who is a true poet. On the other hand, one individual may have just sufficient perception of beauty and order to desire the aid of modulated language in expressing his thoughts, whilst he is altogether wanting in the higher qualities of Poetry.

We have dwelt long upon the mechanical part of Poetry, but chiefly because the distinctive characteristics of the art will be better comprehended when it is understood in what manner the common language of everyday life is usually modified, in order to convey them most completely. Versification has, undoubtedly, a certain value apart from all expression, but it is a value of a very inferior kind. Many years ago it was

* Stones of Venice, Vol. iii. Chap. 2.

a fashionable amusement to compose what were called "nonsense verses,"—stanzas which presented all the outward semblance of genuine Poetry, but which were ingeniously contrived to contain no meaning whatever. These verses, when compared with passages in which some grand burst of imagination has been expressed in the external form of prose, exactly illustrate the respective value of the two component parts of metrical Poetry. The one is a dress capable of adding much grace and dignity to the other, but that other is the living power which animates the whole.

The history of Poetry, like that of every other art, has been the history of a struggle between form and spirit. Again and again the formalists have achieved a temporary success. Their works have been praised as "correct," and those of the opposite school derided; but when a few years have passed away, it has been found that the passion of the heart has disdained to be crushed within the narrow limits of scholastic rules. In the long-run, men will find out where the heart has spoken, and will brush aside the systems of the learned with some impatience, if they conflict with the genuine enthusiasm of earnest spirits.

With such enthusiasm all who desire to appreciate Poetry aright must be prepared to sympathise. The greatest Poetry is the expression of the hopes and fears, the affections and aspirations, the doubts and the passionate snatchings of truth of the noblest and greatest men. It presents to us the emotional aspects of the material world, the individual and personal side of comprehensive moral systems. It is the account of details given by the most keen-

sighted, the distant view described by the most far-seeing. Not only so;—Poetry is a true inspiration. The passion of the poet kindles, he knows not how, and he feels things to be true, he knows not why. And in pouring out the fulness of his heart, he gives utterance oftentimes to truths of mighty import, whose full significance he himself does not perceive. So that it may with truth be said of those most deeply imbued with the spirit of this art:—

“ As little children lisp and tell of Heaven,
So thoughts beyond their thought to those high bards
were given.”

PART IV.



P A R T I V.

CHAPTER I.

IN our previous discussions we have more than once had occasion to recognise that an art may exist under different conditions, and may be susceptible of a variety of modifications. Some of these modified arts have been treated at length in their place, as, for example, Pantomime and Elocution, which, though branches of Acting, it was found more convenient to deal with separately. Others, such as Engraving, have been merely alluded to in passing, since to have done more would have interfered with a comprehensive view of the art under which they are comprised, while their position with respect to the functions of the latter is more or less obvious. Others, however, have not been specially mentioned at all. It is purposed now to examine briefly some of the leading principles which govern these Subsidiary Arts.

The modification of an art is due either to the conditions under which it is produced, or to the purpose with which it is connected. For example, Painting is subject to influences of both kinds. In the employment of its full powers it embraces form,

colour, and chiaroscuro. Of these, the character of the first varies greatly according to circumstances, being either naturalistic and imitative, or abstract and conventional. But in Engraving and kindred arts, the use of colour is entirely dispensed with; and in the art of designing in stained glass, colour is used in its intensest and most brilliant form, whilst the contrast of light and shade is reduced to a minimum. In the common case of engraving from a picture, the artist is quite in the position of a translator. His means are very different from those of the original artist, yet his aim must be to produce as far as possible the same effect, and herein lies the scope for his individuality. It has been well said that, just as the translator of a poem must be himself something of a poet in order to preserve the *fire* of the original in another language, so the engraver must be possessed of real artistic feeling, as well as imitative skill, if his work is fairly to represent the effect of that which he copies. In the same way, the conditions of etching, or drawing with black chalk, or in monochrome, are in many respects unlike those of painting in oils or water-colours. The artist has not merely to translate his subject from Nature's solidity and depth, coloured and illuminated, into pigments upon a flat surface, but into simple light and shade.

The case of stained glass, just referred to, affords a representative example of the modification of an art in consequence of the materials employed. Stained glass is translucent; and when any naturally opaque object is represented upon it, we are confronted with the apparently anomalous circumstances of the sun's

rays passing through it with sufficient freedom to give light to the interior of a building. Further, a work in stained glass is not, as some suppose, produced in the same way as an ordinary painting. The colour is not painted upon the glass, but given to it in the course of its manufacture. The artist, therefore, must so order his design that each hue shall occupy a certain definite space. A piece of glass of that hue is then cut to the exact shape required. The whole design having been thus prepared in defined masses of colour, the *shading* is painted upon it, and "burnt into" the glass, and the whole is put together, like a puzzle, with strips of metal which are grooved to receive the edges. The joints are then soldered, and the window is complete. It does not need much argument to prove that it is altogether unwise to endeavour to make such a work as this look like a picture. Any effort to represent high relief must result in absurdity; the translucency of the glass is quite fatal to such an attempt. The artist in stained glass is more restricted in the matter of relief than the sculptor in bas-relief. And we may assert most emphatically this principle, which is of constant application to the Subsidiary Arts—that there is no merit whatever in the attempt to do anything which is out of harmony with the materials and methods at the disposal of the artist. On the contrary, his strength invariably lies in the direction indicated by the means which he has most obviously at command. The designer in stained glass has clearly outline and colour chiefly at his disposal. Accordingly, relief—which is not within his province—should be indicated

as simply as possible, and choice should be made of such subjects as can most readily dispense with it. The groups of figures should be simple, and any landscape background which may be introduced should be of an entirely abstract type. Meanwhile the contour of the figures should be exquisite, as well as the lines upon which the indication of the folds of drapery, and the like, must largely depend. As a colourist the designer must excel, or his work is sure to fail. The Munich stained glass, which is so popular at the present time, is admired by most people for the very quality which it ought not to possess, that, namely, of attempted realism. Almost all the windows of Glasgow Cathedral are filled with stained glass, and they are mostly of this school. In them we may see indeed

"The history of the world
Brought down from Genesis to the Day of Judgment,"

but the effects obtained are seldom artistic. The necessity for some conventionality is recognised by the repetition of the same canopy over a variety of subjects, and by the treatment of the foreground, but realism is aimed at as far as possible; and it is even attempted in some instances to represent clouds and sky-effects. In other cases, a dark-blue background is used, from which the figures stand out in relief. In these windows, the obvious translucency of all the objects depicted introduces an element of absurdity; which is enhanced by the fact that the light which illuminates the design is not fixed in force, but varies with the hour and the season. Consequently.

effects of light and shade, which would pass muster in a subdued light, altogether lose their balance when the sun shines brightly. In the same way, colour which is intended to be at all realistic becomes quite unnatural when strongly illuminated.

In the case of a work which depends, not upon complete imitation, but upon beauty of outline and harmony of colour, this varying force of light does not matter in the least. The representation appeals to the spectator on certain obvious conditions, and these being accepted, no inconvenience is felt to result from the absence of other things. What is offered can be enjoyed, because it can be treated fully and successfully. Its value would not be enhanced by an effort to attain another and an impossible effect. An excellent living artist in stained glass is Mr Holliday, the designer of the Brunel window in Westminster Abbey.*

The other great modifying influence in art is fitness for a purpose. In the case of the stained windows with dark - blue backgrounds, above referred to, the primary function of a window—viz., to admit light—has been sacrificed ; for with the exception of a small space in the centre they are practically almost opaque. This is obviously an error. In the same way, whenever colour is employed to decorate a work of art which is already devoted to a purpose, that purpose must be steadily kept in view. The wall of a house, for example, may be coloured ; but the colour should be so arranged that it may not be

* His works, however, exhibit an unfortunate tendency to the use of browns and greens of a somewhat grimy quality.

forgotten that we are looking at a building whose parts have their definite functions apart from their beauty. Thus, tinted stones and marbles are valuable as sources of colour, since their nature is obviously in harmony with the materials of the building generally. A diapered pattern is an excellent way of colouring a wall, because it in no way interferes with the structural effect of uneven surfaces, but is seen at once to be something applied to an independent piece of work. Thus does the disposition of colour, which is a part of the art of Painting, become modified when associated with an art like Architecture.

All the Permanent Arts are liable to such modifications. The mere enumeration of the resulting Subsidiary Arts would be an almost endless, if not impossible, task. A few examples, however, may be given.

In Poetry we have a multitude of different kinds, each requiring a distinct mode of treatment—such as epic, lyric, elegiac, pastoral poetry, &c. The different kinds of ideas to be expressed, and the different order and progress of those ideas, suggest different metres and different diction. Then, again, there is dramatic poetry, which has, of course, to be constructed with an especial view to stage-effect. The long soliloquy, which would repay careful perusal in the study, would be tiresome if spoken from before the footlights. The brisk conversation between several persons, which would be confusing to read, would be clear enough with the part of each individual separately sustained. Again, in dramatic poetry, we encounter the varied exactions of Tragedy

and Comedy. In the one case, pity and sorrow are the emotions to be aroused; in the other, we are made to sympathise with happiness and success, or we are amused with satire and humour. Very different qualities of mind are involved in these different branches of poetical art; few men, indeed, are able to carry out a genuine tragedy to its final catastrophe with success. Desdemona is killed under a misapprehension, and the mistake is cleared up just when it is too late. More often the playwright lets the explanation come in time, and avoids the bitter conclusion.

In dramatic poetry, too, the conditions of representation suggest certain conditions of place and time. These, carried to an absurd extreme, produced the famous laws of "The Unities," which once ruled the Drama with so stern a sway. The value of these "Unities" turns upon the question, how far we can usually imagine the actual interval between the parts of a dramatic representation to be expanded. Whether, that is to say, we can, without effort, fancy days or years to have elapsed between the acts, or only hours. And also, how readily we can imagine ourselves to be successively in places far distant from each other, in so short a time. For our present purpose, it is sufficient to indicate these questions, as showing the nature of the problem to be solved in the dramatic employment of Poetry.

Modifications of the methods employed by Painting will be recognised in great variety. We have oil and water colours, fresco and miniature painting, mosaics, illuminations, enamelling, steel and wood engraving,

etching, mezzotint, and many similar arts. Under this head, too, come the arts of costume and of grouping in the Drama and the Ballet, as well as that of scene-painting. These have been deprecated as substitutes for excellence in Acting and Dancing, but the value of their pictorial merit should be fully recognised. In the recent performances of "The Merchant of Venice" at the "Prince of Wales's Theatre" (1875), the stage-pictures were works of real art. Not only was the scenery excellent, and the dress picturesque, but both were arranged in combination with admirable effect. In the scenes representing the choosing of the caskets, the characters were so grouped as to present an exquisite harmony of colour. Given good acting, such a thoroughly artistic *mise-en-scène* is a valuable adjunct; it is only despicable when it is made an excuse for slovenliness or incompetence in the main business of the stage.

As an art of comparatively little importance, but one requiring for its perfection somewhat of the painter's eye for colour and form, as well as his love of Nature, we may mention Gardening. This, as Sir Joshua Reynolds has observed,* should, like Painting, show us Nature, but Nature to advantage dressed. The diversity between the conditions of the two arts may be indicated by saying that, while it would be deplorable for a painter to think like a landscape-gardener, it is very desirable for a landscape-gardener to think like a painter.

Under the head of Sculpture we may class medalling and die-sinking, gem-engraving, ceramic

* Thirteenth Discourse.

ware, fret-work, *repoussé* work, &c., as well as carving in such materials as ivory or wood, which exact a distinctive style.

But the most numerous and important of the Subsidiary Arts are those which are directly connected with some material use, and which may be classed with Architecture under the head of the "poetry of Service." Such are the arts associated with furniture, china and glass ware, pottery, and the like; glass and iron employed in building; wrought-iron-work for gates, bell-handles, &c.; cutlery, jewelry, plate, embroidery, lace-work, and dress generally; bookbinding, &c. &c.

Now in all of these, the first thing to be considered, as we saw in treating of Architecture, is the purpose for which the articles are destined. Take, for example, bookbinding. The primary function of a book is to be read, and therefore the primary object of the bookbinder should be to make it readable. That is to say, the volume should open easily, the cover should be strong enough to protect the leaves, and at the same time not too heavy in proportion to its size, while the leaves should be so firmly fixed in it as to be in no danger of coming out when they are fairly used. If these essentials are provided, the binder may proceed to embellish the cover in any way that may be desired. But at present it is the fashion to secure the decoration first, and let the real business of the binder make shift in the best way it can. Years ago, books were usually issued, in the first instance, stitched in simple boards, which were not intended to do more than serve as a convenient

temporary protection. The owner was supposed to have the volumes bound subsequently according to his own taste. A similar practice still prevails on the Continent. Here, however, while the books are still only roughly stitched together, the boards are now made more or less ornamental. So far, so good,—there is no use in anything being ugly. But the binders have gone on increasing the embellishment of the covers to a point far beyond what is consistent with a temporary arrangement, and have altogether omitted to increase the durability of the binding in a corresponding degree. Such sham bindings, for that is what they really are, are especially used for books intended to be given as presents or prizes to children. The cover is got up in all the colours of the rainbow ; gold-leaf is lavished on the outside ; and the book itself infallibly falls to pieces after the first perusal. Not only as a matter of convenience, but as a matter of artistic feeling and consistency, a man of good taste would rather have his books bound properly, even in the plainest leathern covers, than have them inefficiently stuck into the most gorgeous bindings ever supplied for a modern “*édition de luxe*.”

So far our way is clear, but a more difficult question remains. What objects of material usefulness are suitable for artistic decoration ? Mr Ruskin would banish Art altogether from shop-fronts, railway-stations, bridges, and the like, on the ground that people will not have time to look at it there calmly. His theory is, that by introducing Art into matters connected with daily work, it will be merely

vulgarised without giving any appreciable amount of pleasure. He says, "Put it in the drawing-room, not into the workshop ; put it upon domestic furniture, not upon tools of handicraft." Not upon tools of handicraft certainly, we should all feel it to be out of place there—but why ? Now, applied Art is an evidence in every case of a certain delight in the object adorned by it, of a feeling that, though the article is devoted to certain material aims, yet it is not incapable of association with the higher thoughts and pleasanter fancies of those who use it. An object, therefore, should be decorated because we like it, and the use of it, and should not appeal to our liking merely because it is decorated. And articles of luxury and convenience should naturally receive decoration first, those of necessity afterwards. We are far from saying that a working man should not take delight in his work ; but it seems clear that, at the present day, manual labour is so far dissociated from artistic social surroundings that it would be simply absurd to think of carving hammers or planes with elaborate embellishment. Moreover, such decoration would infallibly be degraded by considerations of cheapness, which would be sure to involve machine-made ornament. Let our working men have neat and pretty rooms and furniture first, and by-and-by, if they have leisure, they may begin to think about decorating their workshops and their tools. But why should we not employ Art in a railway-station ? Mr Ruskin apparently believes that no good thing can be possibly connected with a railway, and that there the matter ends. But

many of us—while sharing his dislike of the feverish haste and hurry of modern life, and deprecating, as he does, the intrusion of the grim embankments, traversed by screeching engines dragging their trains full of perpetually-feeding tourists into the fairest natural scenery—are content to balance the advantages of the railway against its disadvantages. It is a great nuisance to have the country cut up on all sides by the iron roads, and invaded by armies of ignorant loungers; and a locomotive engine is very ugly and noisy, and occasionally causes trouble by killing the passengers; but then we are enabled by its aid to visit a great many more places than we should otherwise do, and with comparatively little risk and trouble; to economise our time in a variety of ways, and to transact our necessary business with wonderful ease and speed. On the whole, most people have rather pleasant associations with railways than otherwise. There is, then, no reason why we should not decorate the railway-station, if we do it properly. It is true that people who only want to "catch" a train will not have time to admire works of art, but these hasty persons are not the only folk who patronise the railway. And as we shall not induce people to do without railways, we may as well make the best of them.

On the whole, it may be taken as a sufficient general rule, that decorative art may be rightly applied to any object whose use may become pleasant to us, and which is not associated with any sordid ideas of actual necessity.

With regard to all applied Art, we may assume that,

before any useful object receives the slightest decoration, it is essential that its material be thoroughly good of its kind. A gilt cornice, with plaster mouldings and ornaments, is infinitely inferior to a plain bar of metal or wood, on which to hang the curtains. A piece of furniture veneered with mahogany would be very much better made of plain stained deal. Veneering, by the way, is always objectionable if it gives a false impression as to the material. Mr C. L. Eastlake remarks that veneer, when used for decorative purposes, should be sunk in the solid wood, a small margin of the latter being left round it, so as to preserve the edges from injury, and to proclaim at once the method employed. This is an honest and satisfactory way of using a costly wood. We can then see exactly what the article is made of, and perceive that another material has been associated with it, for the purpose of ornament. So, again, it is, as a general rule, extremely desirable that we should be able to see, not only what a thing is made of, but also how it is made. There is no kind of use in concealing the joints of a piece of furniture, at any rate none which would commend itself to sensible men. And the absurd efforts to conceal them, which characterise so much modern work of the kind, often result in insecurity and weakness. Honesty and efficiency are the foundations upon which all true Art-decoration should rest.

As for the decoration itself, there is a great fundamental principle which is applicable to nearly every branch of the poetry of Service. It is the principle of Abstraction. Arts which are independent of ma-

terial uses may, in many cases, aim at direct imitation of natural objects. We have already seen under what restrictions this imitation may be carried out. The so-called imitative arts, although we may question the desirability of their devotion to deceptive realism, nevertheless have as an object such a representation of the outward form, colour, movements, &c., of men and things, as they are able to achieve; the chief limit to this being assigned in the principle that it is not right to imitate lower at the expense of higher characteristics, that when the higher qualities demand it, the lower ones must be subdued, or, if necessary, suppressed to make way for them. Now, the outward characteristics of an object are not the things which constitute its essential being; and in all imitative Art, which deserves in any way the name of Fine Art or Poetry, something is given besides mere mimicry. Even to inanimate nature, a painter conveys somewhat of his own feeling. A landscape, as depicted by him, is not only so much form and colour. It is seen that he loves it—that it is beautiful to him; that he is conscious of its grandeur—that it is sublime; that mixed with its brightness and beauty there is a tender gloom—that he feels it to be even pathetic. Still more is this keen personal interest aroused by such subjects as involve the representation of life—most of all when the subjects are human. It is, therefore, altogether a degradation of Art to use its full powers of external imitation, and at the same time to take no account of the higher and nobler qualities which it is also able to convey. Accordingly, just in proportion as Art becomes decor-

ative, it should cease to be realistic. That is to say, whenever objects are imitated for purely æsthetic purposes, for the sake of their outward qualities merely, the fact that the imitation is but a partial one should be fully and explicitly avowed; and to this end, the outward characteristics themselves should be presented in a degree short of entirety. Otherwise an impression will be conveyed of something wanting. The fact of the decorative purpose of the Art will not appear, and it will seem that the artist, having intended to give a full and just idea of the object imitated, has failed to appreciate those very qualities which are of the highest value and importance. Now in applied Art, the Art is not only used for its purely æsthetic qualities, but it is used in connection with purposes altogether beside its own immediate characteristics. These purposes furnish the chief motive of the whole work, and leave no room for the intrusion of the kind of feeling suitable to the complete representation of natural objects. Such imitation, therefore, as is admissible in applied Art, must, as a rule, be of a thoroughly abstract character. Even the material beauty of Nature would be felt to be degraded, if it were brought down in its fulness to serve the purpose of mere decoration.*

It must not be supposed that in laying down this principle we are departing in any way from the stan-

* Imitation of form may, as a rule, be carried further in Sculpture than in other arts, because the absence of colour, of aerial effect, and, to a great extent, of artificial light and shade, prevent its offending the eye by any appearance of a parody on Nature. Hence architectural Sculpture may often approach closely to direct imitation of natural form.

dard of Nature. Nature is indeed to be followed, but in the spirit rather than the letter. For example, flowers are exquisitely beautiful natural objects, but they are not intended to walk upon ; and accordingly a carpet covered with representations of flowers, coloured and shaded to resemble Nature, is an artistic mistake. But, it will be said, Nature does put flowers upon her own carpet,—the daisy in the field. True : but observe that the beauty of the daisy, in this respect, is altogether due to its appearing as a small patch or spot of white upon a green ground :—

“ Meadows trim—with daisies *pie'd*.”

As soon as we examine it so closely that it is to us no longer a small white fleck, but a flower with yellow centre and delicately-tinted petals,—it is no longer a thing to be trodden upon.

Further ; repetition is obviously a condition of many forms of decorative art. The pattern of a carpet or a wall-paper must, as a rule, consist, not of a comprehensive design, but of one upon a small scale, which is repeated as often as may be necessary. Now, to represent the same flower over and over again is unartistic, because no two real flowers are alike. Still more absurd is it to reproduce the same *bunch* of flowers a number of times, for no such repetition could possibly occur in fact. But the emblem called a “fleur-de-lys” may, with perfect propriety, be repeated as often as may be required ; for it is but a type of the flower whose name it bears, and Nature does repeat the type continually. Any generalised or abstract design may be thus used but

to attempt the deceptive realisation of particular objects for such employment is to forsake Nature, not to follow her.*

Again, true artistic principles are never opposed to common-sense, and any mode of decoration which is inconsistent with the actual facts of the object to which it is applied is a bad one. For example, the favourite "box-pattern," in patchwork, is utterly unsuited for the cover of a chair or an ottoman; for it *looks* as though the surface were covered with pyramidal lumps (which, by the way, would be extremely uncomfortable to sit upon); and although we know it is really smooth, the unpleasant deception will assert itself. So, too, a landscape upon the curved outside of a jug, or inside of a basin, is altogether out of place; for the sense, either of the solidity and relief of the houses, trees, &c., or else of the necessary shape of the pottery, must seem to be contradicted. The Greeks, with true artistic taste, rendered the decoration of their vases entirely abstract and conventional. They made use of human figures, but these were represented in outline only; the folds of drapery and the like being indicated, not by shading, but merely by lines. By this mode of treatment, the effect of the contour of the vase was not

* Floral decoration may obviously be carried on to more direct imitation when the flowers and leaves are added to architectural features. Flowers are Nature's own architectural decoration; and they may be ours, provided we treat them as Nature does. The leaves upon a Gothic capital are no more out of place than the clematis which clings to a cottage porch, or the ivy which encircles the oak-stem. But they must not be repeated: and, as we have seen, the fact of their service must be made manifest.

injured, and the dignity of the decorative design was preserved.

This latter kind of ornament, however abstract, may of course retain its individual character, and in that case it is absurd to repeat it in the same work. A short time ago, the writer noticed in a shop window a specimen of wall-paper, ornamented with figure-subjects in compartments. They were apparently copied from some Greek design, and were of the abstract character referred to above ; but the three or four subjects which constituted the pattern were repeated again and again, and, in a room hung with this paper, would occur some hundreds of times. Most persons will recognise the absurdity of depicting the same people as partaking of the same banquet, and playing the same lyre all over the room. It ought not, therefore, to require much argument to prove that a similar objection applies to the representation of the same spray of flowers, with the same buds, and the same leaves, and the same thorns, and the same dewdrops, in the same positions, on every square foot of the drawing-room walls.

The general principle may be stated, as applicable to all decorative art, that no direct imitation should be repeated, even when it is only a partial one ; and, indeed, that repetition may be allowed only when the design is either entirely typical, or may be regarded as a part of a larger work. Thus, in the illuminated border of a book, if we have a representation of leaves—though it may consist merely of outlines, and these of no elaborate accuracy—if we can recognise that the idea of the decoration is the bending grace

of foliage, then good Art requires that no two sprays shall be alike, though they may resemble each other, and balance each other as parts of the design. But if the ornament is merely one of scrolls and fillets, which, though their curve and general effect may be derived from those of foliage, have yet no obvious character of imitation; then the parts may be made to correspond exactly, and the repetition will no more offend the eye than the correspondence of the opposite sides of a pansy.

In every case in which an art is found in service, its conditions are, first those of the material purpose to which it is applied, and then those of the independent art with which it is æsthetically allied. That is to say, when colour is employed, we must regulate it, and judge of it, by the principles of the art of Painting; when solid form is used, by those of Architecture or Sculpture; when words are the medium of expression, by the principles of Verbal Poetry. But, in each case, our practice and our judgment must be subject to a consideration of the purposes with which these arts have been brought into requisition. Thus, we shall be able to dress the better if we have somewhat of the painter's eye for colour, but it will not do to dispose the colours merely with reference to their harmony and relative force; we must contrive that they shall conduce to the due expression of the primary function of the dress, as the convenient and modest covering of a human body, with all its complex and subtle graces of form and movement. A chair or a bookcase is to be designed with the architect's feeling for the poetry

of Inanimate Form, but, before all, it must be made comfortable to sit in, or convenient for holding books. A drama may be a poem, but it should primarily be suitable for acting. A song should be full of delicate fancies and poetical feeling, but, to be a good song, it should also have a well-marked rhythm, and plenty of open vowels.

The modification of the Fugitive Arts may be due, like that of the Permanent ones, to differences of means or of purpose. Thus, Music becomes modified, in an important way, by the nature of the instruments employed. A composition suitable for the piano will not always do for the organ. The music which is adapted to a military band could not be rendered by a quartette of strings. On the other hand, the music of an opera would be ill adapted to a Mass, and the style of a chorale must clearly be different from that of a war-song.

But the Fugitive Arts owe their modification most frequently to combination, rather than abstraction. Thus, the Opera combines Music and Acting, and frequently Dancing. This last should acquire a very distinctly modified character from the nature of the lyric drama in which it is introduced. The influence of Poetry upon Music has already been briefly referred to, in treating of the latter art. But with regard to the Opera, it is to be noticed that each of the combined arts—Acting and Music—should, logically, be influenced by the other. Wagner has insisted so strongly on the necessity of this relativity with regard to Music that he seems to be in some danger of subordinating it altogether to the dramatic element

in the joint result. The most simple and logical way of treating the question is to admit frankly that Music and the Drama should be allowed equal rights in the Opera. The music should be dramatic; the drama should be of a character suited to musical expression. This is so far Wagner's original idea, that he has himself written his own *libretti*, so as to secure an identity of feeling and purpose in words and music. With such a principle the matter becomes very simple. If we compare "Lohengrin" with, say, the "Nozze di Figaro," we must at least confess that the former is the more consistent. At the same time, we may readily allow that a single tone of feeling may so far predominate in the mind, at certain times, as to admit of—or rather to require—expression in the sustained form of the *aria*, &c. The "bridal chorus" in the third act of "Lohengrin" supplies an example of a similar kind of sustained feeling, which, however, does not in the slightest degree interfere with the dramatic action of the opera. There are some who regard opera as altogether absurd, but such persons have not taken the trouble to consider the first conditions of Art, the end of which is not, and never was, deceptive realism, but the impressing of the mind with certain classes of ideas, and the arousing of sympathy with a certain order of feeling. Those who appreciate Music keenly are never struck with the unreality of an opera. They come to witness the effect of certain passions and emotions, and it seems to them the most natural thing in the world that these should find musical expression. They are prepared for the combination of two arts, not for the realistic imitation of everyday life.

We may, then, sum up the characteristics of the Subsidiary Arts by saying that every such art should be considered with reference to its inherent character, and also to the conditions and purpose of its employment. If these principles are maintained, the questions which arise in connection with applied Art, though extremely various, will be found to be of a very simple character.

CHAPTER II.

CONCLUSION.

WE have now completed a brief survey of the wide and interesting field occupied by the Fine Arts. On looking back, we find that we have travelled over a very extensive region, exhibiting very diverse features. Yet we have seen that the arts, however different in their methods and their aims, are yet all essentially human, and their variety is only such as to correspond with the various conditions of human existence. Man is a wondrous compound of body and spirit, and both his material and his immaterial part display an infinite complexity and variety in the race and in the individual. None of us is like another, and our bodily frames are not less individually fitted for the reception of a vast multitude of different impressions, than our entire being to fill a distinct place in the social world. The Fine Arts are, in like manner, compounded of form and spirit, and, of their different kinds of form, each is the outcome of a different kind of human physical energy, and appeals to a different modification of human thought and feeling. As to the external character of the art, it is sometimes the hand that forms and the eye

that appreciates ;—vigorous chisel or delicate pencil is employed, and the sense of sight acknowledges the pleasures of Sculpture or Painting. Now the fingers touch some responsive instrument, or the voice wakens the air into vibration, and the ear receives the impressions of Music. Now the limbs move, and the voice declaims, and eye and ear together are fascinated by the art of Acting. Now a subtler influence comes into play, and the brain, using the dry materials of words, works with them the magic spell of Poetry. And, underlying these external features, the heart and soul of the artist are found animating and ordering all. Various, of course, is this spiritual part of Art also. Though the same doubts, and hopes, and fears, and delights are characteristic of us all, yet do they ever take some new form, and appear in some unexpected way. The appeal of Art is made to common feelings, but it is made with a certain individuality. And the search of man after perfection and purity, his eager scanning of the great problems of his existence, take a multitude of shapes, and find their expression in varied kinds of Art. Thus, the whole range of Poetical Art may be regarded, in all its breadth and complexity, as the natural outcome of the human mind endeavouring to embody itself in external form.

The undue exaltation of either of these component parts—form and spirit—is fraught with danger to the dignity and value of the art. In the preceding chapters, the evil of exalting the mechanical part at the expense of the other has been chiefly insisted upon. It may, perhaps, be thought that too little

merit has been recognised in technical skill—in the brilliant “execution” of the pianist, the imitative dexterity of the painter, the cleverness in “making up” of the actor, &c. Certainly, it must not be supposed that these are of no importance. But it has been assumed throughout that excellence in such matters ought to exist as the very condition of the artist’s work. He has no business to be considered an artist at all until he has attained a certain sufficient mastery over the means of his own especial art. Nay, further:—no work will ever be well done which is done slightly or carelessly. Anything which aspires to rank with the efforts of great and wise men must at least be done—even in the mere mechanical part of it—as well and as finely as we can possibly do it. But these essays have been written, not for artists, but for the public to whom their works are submitted, and for whose benefit it would appear on the face of it that their works are produced. For this public the thought embodied in the art is surely the most important part. But it is by no means intended that technical impotence is to be lightly condoned, or that any man possessed of an idea is to be considered a great artist because he has chosen to try to express it through an art of whose methods and capabilities he has no adequate knowledge. This extreme is in many ways as hurtful as the other. Even the feeling and intellectual tone of the artist will not be in all respects appreciated unless the technical details of his work be also understood. These it is quite necessary to know something about, in order to a right estimation of

those important departments of Art which are concerned with material Beauty and Sublimity. The man who understands what Beauty really is will not be satisfied with any glaring canvas, simply because it professes to illustrate or enforce some obvious sentiment, albeit the latter may be in its way wholesome enough. Indeed, the sentiment which such a man will appreciate most highly will very often be anything but obvious. It will consist in such feeling of beauty and harmony in forms, and hues, and sounds, and movement,—such delicate sense of their gradation and contrast, as without some study and knowledge will not easily be perceived. Often these are so subtle as to be incommunicable by any means but those of the art employed. They are seen in the picture, but cannot be explained in words; or they are felt in the poem, but cannot be depicted on canvas. Those, then, who desire to understand an art *fully*, must be prepared to make themselves, in some degree, familiar with its technicalities. It is only so that its teaching, at any rate with regard to the beauties of Nature, will have its due effect. At the risk of tediousness it is necessary to remind the reader once more that Art is not mere imitation. It is better than this: it is an endeavour to point out, in such imperfect way as its means allow, the true essential character of this world's loveliness; and to indicate, and in its measure even embody, the higher perfection of which we have here, indeed, the elements, but the elements, alas! only—ever failing of the noblest combination; good and grand, but ever coming short of grandest and best. To a belief in

such possibilities—attainable hereafter if not now—the study of great Art is fitted to lead us. It is hoped that what has been said as to the value of such study of material Beauty, and also respecting the material capabilities and methods of the arts, brief and imperfect though it has been, may induce some readers to follow out the subject for themselves, and perhaps to think more seriously than they have previously done about the use of cultivating Taste at all.

Further, in all that has been said about the “sentiment” of Art, it has in no way been intended to advocate sentimentalism or sensationalism. The failure of the public to appreciate the thought of the artist has been deplored again and again, but it is not meant that ordinary observers do not recognise thought at all. On the contrary, they generally seize upon it the very first thing. But the evil is that they are content with any thought. They accept it as a matter of course, and take it, poor as it may be, as a sufficient motive for a picture or a carving, looking to the skill with which it is worked out as the source of the real value of the production. This skill they usually do not understand, often they will candidly say so; but they still look at the success of the outward embodiment of the artist's idea as the test of merit. They are satisfied if the external imitation is sufficient to produce for them a tolerably complete illusion. These persons see little to admire in the old Italian painters, because the illusion offered by them is, especially in our present state of historical knowledge, so imperfect. Show them a

mediæval Madonna, and they will begin by objecting that they are quite certain the Madonna never looked thus. On the other hand, the commonest piece of modern claptrap affords them unfeigned delight. Let it imitate some quite commonplace scene, let it suggest some quite commonplace reflection upon it, and it is only necessary for the imitation to be sufficiently pointed, and the reflection tolerably obvious, for the picture to obtain plenty of applause. The more sensational it is, the more striking its contrasts, the greater its exaggerations, the surer it will be to attract appreciative notice. The mere pleasure conveyed by the outward embodiment of notions, otherwise likely to remain vague, is a great source of the popularity of Art. This causes the success of the modern school of historical painting, which might be described as the "Archæologically Accurate." Artists of this school select some incident of history, get the costumes of the period absolutely correct, take the features of the characters, if possible, from contemporary portraits, and then infuse into each, in the broadest and most unmistakable way, such expression as the incident depicted most obviously suggests. There may be nothing whatever in the picture but what would have occurred naturally to any one who had thought about the subject in the most superficial way, yet it is readily accepted. It does for the average spectator what he could not do for himself;—it realises the incident, and suggests the personal appearance of the actors. This, then, was how James II. used to dress! this was how he looked on receiving the news of the

landing of the Prince of Orange ! How clever of the artist to represent him pale, and in a state of utter mental and bodily collapse ! And what a wonderful piece of satire it was to depict one of these be-ribboned and be-laced courtiers in the act of listening at the door ! Sometimes a still cheaper sentiment is employed. Some trivial flirtation, or some feeble incident of a weak-minded love-making, furnishes the theme of the artist ; but in order to give it an appearance of something uncommon, to make it seem, if not dignified, at least quaint and curious, recourse is had to the artifice of dressing the characters in the costume of the thirteenth or sixteenth century. The general public, who have never considered how people of those periods would look when they were making love, or indeed whether they ever made love at all, are quite enraptured when the artist points out to them that a young man in a slashed doublet and silk hose may conceivably have looked quite as sheepish as any young man of the present day in frock-coat and trousers.

Because people so often judge foolishly about the sentiment of a work of art, it does not follow that this is due to their want of recognition of technical characteristics. On the contrary, it is due to their attaching too much importance to such technical excellences as they can recognise. These are in such cases generally insignificant enough, being for the most part comprised under imitative dexterity and a broad force of expression. But it never occurs to the persons who delight in them to *think* at all about the sentiment of the work. They do not consider

that this should be seriously judged—that, if it is worth anything, it will be something more than the mere obvious sentiment suggested by the very outline of the facts—that high and noble thought is almost sure to lie somewhat below the surface, and will seldom or never be rudely blurted out in such wise as to attract attention from every passer-by. It is, in truth, not enough that the sentiment of Art should be harmless, or even that it should be definitely on the side of morality and religion. It must be graceful, dignified, wise, if it is to exert any useful or permanent influence.

With all this, it must not be supposed that an artist is to be in every case a kind of conscious pedagogue. We are rightly to learn from his works, but he is not necessarily to execute them with any idea of teaching. The value of his Art is, in the long-run, due to *what he is in himself*. He works at it simply because he loves it, and he throws his whole energy and being into it. And he can in no way produce a wise picture, or statue, or poem, unless he is a wise man. He cannot calculate the moral and æsthetic tone of his work as if it were a problem to be solved by rule of three, or sentence to be turned into Latin by help of dictionary and grammar. He can cultivate his taste by the study of Nature and of Art, but his works at any given time will reflect his tastes as they then are. His great object should be to express what he really feels and honestly thinks, as well as he possibly can; to take the greatest pains to think and feel rightly, and to be continually learning how to express himself more accurately and fully.

As soon as he begins to think about teaching other people, he will very likely degenerate into a prig. The greatest men are generally the most simple-minded. They act, or play, or paint, because they like it. They are conscious of wondrous sources of beauty and delight all around them, which they are eager to explore, and they appeal for sympathy to others: but apart from all sympathy, it is the *Art* which they supremely love. In this they are ever striving to improve, ever learning something, achieving something. This is the end they set before themselves, and for this they devote themselves simply and unaffectedly to hard work.

No artist can possibly be taught (directly), by means of books and papers, the fancies, and feelings, and exalted thought, so frequently alluded to in the preceding chapters. If he sets himself deliberately to be instructive, or interesting, or imaginative, he will very often end in being dull, or sensational, or sickly. He ought to take care, above all things, that his work is honest; that he throws his whole liking into it, and does it as *well* as he can. That is all. It is of no use for him to try to feel in a particular way. If he does not feel so, all the books in the world will not teach him how to express that feeling in his work. The true Imagination, the true Poetry, is simply the stamp of his mind as it really is, not of what he has read or heard that it ought to be. As a rule, artists feel this, and it has the effect of making them despise all theoretical books and theoretical teaching. They say, "Such a man *works* well, and is therefore sure to succeed. Such another man is full of sentimental

fancies, and he can't draw at all." This view of Art is the right one for them to take ; but for the public at large, it is to be considered not only *how* they say, but *what* they say. Though for them it would be foolish to attempt to say what they do not feel, that which is of utmost consequence to the outside world is what they *do* feel. And even a man who knows perfectly well that he could never do the thing better, or even so well, is quite entitled to form a judgment as to whether it was worth doing at all.

The artist's individuality will be sure to come out whether he troubles himself about it or not. A painter paints a portrait. His aim is (rightly) to represent his sitter as accurately as he can, to get him upon the canvas to the utmost of his ability. His artist friend comes to see the picture. He criticises the modelling, the tone of the shadows, the colouring generally, the treatment of the accessories, the balance of light and shade, and so forth. This is very well. Another artist paints the same man, and the same critic gives his judgment, which, this time, differs on various points. But a fourth person, who knows little about the *technique* of the picture, comes in, and perceives at once that while both artists have painted all of the man's characteristics which they saw, *one saw a great deal more than the other.*

Just so (to take another example) is it with the actor. His aim, as far as he himself is concerned, should be to be true to his own conception of his part ; to express this in the most perfect way ; to gain experience of the best methods of arousing in an audience sympathy with different feelings. He

must, in short, be content to learn this art like any other; and, without any great striving after originality, what he has in him will duly assert its power. Even a verbal poet—who, of all artists, is, perhaps, least subjected to mechanical influences—must not neglect study. He cannot, indeed, be a poet without the possession of certain intellectual gifts, but he is not to suppose that the power to use language effectively needs no cultivation. He will doubtless be able to recognise within himself a certain bias towards a lyrical mode of expression, a liking for it, a sense of freedom in it, but it by no means follows that excellence will come to him all at once, and with no effort on his part.* Many persons have a tendency to regard the arts much in the same way as the man who, when asked if he could play the fiddle, replied, "Oh, yes; at least, I have never tried, but I have no doubt I can."

And even with regard to the artist's personal tastes and feelings, while he should simply try to express them frankly and fully, he should bear in mind that they too may be improved by culture. Not indeed (as we have seen) directly, but indirectly, by the general cultivation of his mind. The better he understands Nature and History, in a word, the more he knows, the more he will be able to express; and so, even in

* "True ease in writing comes from art, not chance,
As those move easiest who have learnt to dance."—POPE.

"Without intensity of insight, and innate sublimity and tenderness without limit, we cannot have Milton or Goethe; but Milton and Goethe, when at their work, were thinking of words and syllables, and how to write English and German; and without this we should have had no *Comus* or *Faust*."—PALGRAVE, *Essays on Art*.

such matters, he should not altogether relinquish the position of a learner. Sir Joshua Reynolds continually protests, in his lectures and writings on Painting, against the supposition that excellence in that art is a mere gift of Nature, or that there is any royal road to its attainment. The causes of the declension of Painting are, he says, "indolence—not taking the same pains as our great predecessors took—desiring to find a shorter way."*

He says, speaking of Michel Angelo, "I have no doubt that he would have thought it no disgrace that it should be said of him, as he himself said of Raffaele, that he did not possess his art from Nature, but by long study. He was conscious that the great excellence to which he arrived was gained by dint of labour, and was unwilling to have it thought that any transcendent skill, however natural its effects might seem, could be purchased at a cheaper price than he had paid for it."† Elsewhere the same artist remarks that even the grace which must be added to correctness in Art, in order to satisfy and captivate the mind, "whether we call it genius, taste, or the gift of Heaven," may be acquired, or the artist may at least be put into the way of acquiring it. He is to "teach himself by a continual contemplation of the works of those painters who are acknowledged to excel in grace and majesty; *this will teach him to look for it in Nature, and industry will give him the power of expressing it on canvas.*"‡ Thus, this great painter's counsel may be summed up in the single word *Work*, and this is

* Fifteenth (last) Discourse. † Ibid. ‡ Notes to Du Fresnoy.

the true standpoint for the artist. We may talk of his genius, but his own concern should be not to show himself surprisingly clever, but to be sincere, modest, and industrious.

Sincerity is perhaps the most important principle of Fine Art, both for the artist and the amateur. That is to say, the great question for both is, *What do they really enjoy?* Unless they are honest about this, and unless they care to take the trouble of trying to ascertain why they enjoy what they do, and whether they are right in enjoying it, they will make little progress towards the attainment of a high standard of artistic taste. The majority of persons who visit our Art Galleries, have no suspicion that with a little thought and care they might render the works there exhibited a source of real help and advancement, intellectually and morally, to themselves. They examine them cursorily, and accept the first impression made by them as sufficient. If people would but ask themselves, Why do I like this picture, or this statue, or this building? and would give themselves an honest answer, they would often be constrained to confess the reason to be a very paltry one. It would be in many cases something like the following: "I like this picture, because there is a certain sensuous attractiveness about it. If it were anything but a work of art, I should hesitate to confess that I cared about such things; but being a painting, it is of course quite *en règle* to take pleasure in it." Or—"I like this picture, because it is comical, though I have not considered whether it is worth laughing at." Or—"I like this building, because

I have heard a great deal about it, and have consequently wanted to see it, and because it is very big, and evidently costly." Or—"I like this actor, because he is wonderfully disguised, and I am interested in the plot of the play, and—I have nothing better to do than to come and see it." Or—"I believe, from all I have been told, that I ought to like this statue very much, and so I will do my best to find in it something to admire; but in my heart I don't care for it in the least, and am bored with it."

When a man understands the true reasons for his likings or dislikings, he may proceed to ask himself whether his reasons are adequate, and if he finds himself obliged to answer in the negative, he may be led to inquire what are the right grounds of a wise and noble appreciation. The habit of enjoying what is good, and disliking what is bad in Art, he will probably not acquire without care and study; but if he will only be honest about his own feelings, he may at least know whether or not he *has* acquired it; and if he will take the trouble to investigate the subject, he will no longer be in doubt as to its usefulness or importance. The right appreciation of Art involves no less than a healthy condition of physical sensibility, a vigorous intellect, a quick sympathy, and a pure tone of moral feeling.

And as for the artist,—a similar sincerity will cause him oftentimes to ask himself—Am I doing this because I really enjoy it, and think it worth doing, or only because I think it will be popular?—a question with important bearings upon the character and

value of his Art. For though he will not wisely aim at being continually didactic, yet he must remember that if he does not teach by precept, he cannot help influencing by example. He is not obliged to regard himself as a kind of missionary or prophet, but he cannot escape from the gravest responsibilities. He may work from pure love of his Art, but his works exist for others rather than for himself; and whatever he has expressed in them goes forth to the world with all the force of appeal which he has been able to command. Has he studied Nature?—his view of it will influence the taste of many besides himself. Has he studied human passions?—his theory of life will not fail to drop its seed, and may chance to bear its fruit, in the field of other hearts than his own.

It is in robust and manly thought, having some definite and healthy object, that we must seek for the true greatness of Art. We must look for noble results from men who do not regard Art as a mere show-board for their own abilities, or waste their efforts upon sickly dreams or vague sentimentalities; but who perceive that there is a deeper faith, a wider charity, and a higher purity to which in this world we may yet aspire. It is not too much to hope that the time will one day come when artists of all kinds will see that it is their duty so to let their light shine before men that, through their Art, their Father which is in Heaven may be glorified.

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